HOLY STEPHENS LIBRARY 27289
PN2287.W457 A3
Keep [illegible] off the shelf.
3 7000 0002 3596

STEPHENS COLLEGE
DISCARDED

CLASS _____
BOOK _____

LIBRARY

COLUMBIA, MO.

Here is a colorful autobiography in which the oldest and most picturesque actress on the American stage today tells about the old theater, famous people she knew, such as Gilbert and Sullivan, Dickens, Wilde, Boucicault, and what she thinks of the modern world. Beautifully quaint illustrations enliven the story of Mrs. Whiffen's dramatic life.

KEEPING OFF THE SHELF

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/keepingoffshelf0000mrst_x1j8

COLUMBIA, MO.

Mrs. Thomas Whiffen as She Looks Today

COLUMBIA, MO.

KEEPING OFF THE SHELF

BY

MRS. THOMAS WHIFFEN

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS BY
BERNARD J. ROSENMEYER
AND
WALTER JACK DUNCAN

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO., INC.

27289

KEEPING OFF THE SHELF, COPYRIGHT, 1928 BY E. P. DUTTON & CO., INC. :: :: ALL RIGHTS RESERVED :: :: PRINTED IN U. S. A.

First Printing . . . Oct., 1928
Second Printing . . Dec., 1928

PN
2287
.W45
A3

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. I Begin My Long Climb, *Page* 3
II. I Boo the Goose, 30
III. Drawing Near the Romance of My Life, 38
IV. Mr. Whiffen, 47
V. The First Trip to America, 59
VI. The English Troupe Breaks Up, 72
VII. A Romantic Incident, 78
VIII. Our First Trip to the Far West, 95
IX. "The Two Orphans" and "Pinafore," 112
X. "The Mikado," 134
XI. Death of Mr. Whiffen, 151
XII. "Trelawney of the Wells," 158
XIII. Miss Anglin and "The Great Divide," 172
XIV. Vagrant Memories, 179
XV. More Scattered Leaves, 188
XVI. A Few Questions and Answers, 196

*I*LLUSTRATIONS

Mrs. Thomas Whiffen as She Is Today, *Frontispiece*

Sister Susan, *Facing Page* 8

"And How We All Cried There on the Gray Dock," *Page* 13

Aunt Louisa Pyne and Mrs. Whiffen in Her First "Old Lady" Part, *Facing Page* 18

Old Drury Lane Theatre, *Page* 21

Old Covent Garden, *Page* 25

"I'm Going to Dance with the Galton Girl," *Page* 33

Sister Susan and Mrs. Whiffen when They Were Playing at the Royalty, *Facing Page* 42

"Dalby Tells Me You Are Going to America," *Page* 61

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Whiffen when They First Came to America in 1868, *Facing Page* 66

Mrs. Horace Lingard, *Facing Page* 82

Fay Templeton, May the Fay, when She Was the Infant Prodigy of Her Father's Company, *Facing Page* 90

A Young Man Named David Belasco, *Facing Page* 98

"In the Evenings They Flocked to Our Performance and Threw Money on the Stage," *Page* 107

Illustrations

Modjeska at the Height of Her Career, *Facing Page* 118

Mrs. Whiffen as Buttercup in the First American Production of "Pinafore," *Facing Page* 124

Thomas Whiffen as Sir Joseph in the First American Production of "Pinafore," *Facing Page* 130

"Tom and I Dined with Sullivan at Old Delmonico's," *Page* 137

Scene from "The Private Secretary," by William Gillette, *Facing Page* 146

Memorial Tablet in Rochester Cathedral, *Facing Page* 154

"Then the Carriage Stopped and Off Stepped Two of the Queen's Sikhs," *Page* 161

Mrs. Whiffen and O. P. Heggie in the All-star Revival of "Trelawney of the Wells," *Facing Page* 182

John Drew as Sir William in "Trelawney of the Wells," *Facing Page* 192

KEEPING
OFF
THE SHELF

CHAPTER I—*I Begin My Long Climb*

FAR, FAR UP IN THE BLUE Ridge mountains of Virginia, there is a little cabin. Fruit trees are around it and a stream chuckles through bright green willows. The blue mountain peaks hem it in like walls of velvet, and at night the fireflies are thick in the tall grass. Below is a tiny village, and up the winding road are the rude houses of the good colored folk who greet me so softly as I pass. There is infinite peace here, and the days go by in gentleness.

Here my son plows the fields and my daughter brings me fruit from the orchard, and no one asking for interviews knocks at my humble door. There is a feeling of England that I know in this beautiful countryside, and there is also the feeling of rural America, and so here I have them both,—the

country in which I was born and the country I adopted so many years ago.

There is a little porch on the cabin, overgrown with honeysuckle, the wild kind, haunted by wild bees, and here I sit with my memories. About me are my books and the pictures of those I love, and I am happy. Closing my eyes, I can drift back again to the days that I have known,—to the scenes now vanished,—to that distant time in which I really belong. Here the present and the past may mingle without discord, and I am one with it all. They know me here as the world's oldest actress, not retired, and they respect my desire to rest from the ardours of travel, doing all in their power to keep the new world, now grown so complex, out of my dreams.

I'm afraid I'm a little old-fashioned. I do not own a radio and I do not smoke cigarettes, and I still wear my funny old bonnet. Everyone says, No!—I'm very up-to-date and modern,—perhaps I am in some ways, but I'm sure that a very great part of me belongs back in the age that I believe they are now calling

the Mauve Decade. I'm pretty certain that that is where my heart is, and a great many of my thoughts,—back there with a host of friends and loved ones, the majority of whom are only names now. And how quickly even those names are dimming. So very few of my interviewers of today, young people mostly, seem to know about the bright stars of yesterday. How true is that old saying in our profession, "We are so soon forgot."

Today, because they have asked me to do it, I have dug down into old wardrobe trunks, under old costumes smelling of musk and lavender, and have brought forth scrapbooks and diaries, yellow and brittle with age, and, spreading them out under the honeysuckle, have been attempting to put them into some sort of order, so that I may write some memories of the past.

What ghosts flock around me as I turn these old pages, seeming to guide my pen as I jot down the thoughts that come flooding! They are all about me as I write. I hear their voices; see their youthful faces; hear the rustle of their crinolines and polonaise, and

the paper in their great sleeves, and, O mercy, there's the rustle of newspapers in an enormous spring-bustle! I see them by gas light and by kerosene and even by candle glow. And the voice I hear above the rest is the rich one of my stout Aunt Louisa, saying to me when a very young girl, "You, an actress? Why, you wouldn't even say 'boo' to a goose!"

Yes, this was the answer I received when I suggested that I should like to go on the stage. Looking at those words now they seem harmless enough, but at the time, about sixty-eight years ago, I can remember vividly how unhappy those quaint, old-fashioned words of criticism made me feel. However, I suppose my aunt's reprimand was well deserved, for from childhood I had always been shy, quiet, and outwardly unemotional, hardly the requisites for an actress, and up to that time had shown no signs of any aptitude for the theatrical profession. Yet the latent desire was strong in me, for I was truly a natural daughter of the theatre, my mother being one of the well-known Pyne sisters, of whom there were

three, Mary Ann (my mother), Susan, and Louisa, all fine singers.

Louisa Pyne had the finest voice; was the youngest of the talented sisters and became the most famous. Often she was called the natural successor of Jenny Lind. Mother was the eldest of that interesting trio. She was not only a singer but an accomplished musician, a fine pianist and organist, and could play the most difficult music at sight.

Mother was married when she was eighteen to my father, Joseph West Galton, one of the secretaries in the London general post-office, and as she was teaching piano when she was only thirteen, she was able to purchase all the linen and silver for her trousseau with her own earnings.

I was one of five children, three brothers and my sister Susan, although one brother died when only an infant. I was born in the year 1844, just when Prince Albert was coming to the fore in the hearts of the English people, and Lord Melbourne's power with the Queen had waned. Queen Victoria was extremely popular with the whole nation, and

the Victorian Age was in full swing. Prince Albert was just planning the Great Exhibition which made him more popular.

My father was a delicate man and passed away prematurely at the age of thirty-three, and I retain only one clear recollection of him. That was in the year 1851 at the exhibition at Sydenham, after Albert's Crystal Palace had been removed from Hyde Park. Sydenham, in those days, might have been compared to a guild or fair where all sorts of Victorian arts and crafts were exhibited. I remember that my mother was extremely gifted at making artificial wax flowers, much in vogue as house decorations then, under glass coverings, and a white rose tree she had made, standing nearly three feet high, was displayed at that time. I recall being very proud of it as it was pointed out to me among many other wax wonders, and of course it was the very best of the lot.

I still can visualize my tall, good-looking father, patience personified, carrying me most of the time, for I was quite overcome by the heat of the Crystal Palace which was like a

Sister Susan

great hot-house, completely under the huge dome of glass. We seemed to walk for miles through all sorts of strange objects and bewildering arrays of food stuffs, until everything went black suddenly, and I awoke outside the building beneath a grateful shade tree, still in my father's arms. Some one said that I had fainted, and there was something dramatic and thrilling about it. I was glad to be the center of a crowd, although I shyly hid my head. And there the brief picture fades from my memory, with my father's white face bending over me, and his deep, blue-grey eyes searching my face, anxiously.

He died that same year. How depressing death was made in England in the early fifties! Everything conspired to take all hope out of it. Men wound thick, black-silk bands around their high hats, which fell in long streamers down the back, and the horses, drawing the hearse, wore tall plumes; but the most barbarous custom of all, known to few people nowadays, was the hiring of what were called "Mutes," a sort of hired mourner,—two silent men dressed in dead black and

holding staves in their hands, who kept ghastly vigil at the front door, one on each side, standing there day and night until the day of the funeral. They were living horrors and I remember my fear of them.

Mother was left with four young children, the oldest was barely eight years old, and although she had many pupils (she was still giving piano lessons), it was nip and tuck to make ends meet. Pupils paid very little for instructions those days, even though Mother was considered a highly competent teacher. However, we did not know real poverty, for my aunts, Aunt Louisa and Aunt Susan, who were then in good positions in the London theater and unmarried, played the good angels and helped Mother out considerably.

Aunt Louisa, the real business head of the trio, was in partnership with William Harrison. She was said to have borne a striking resemblance to Queen Victoria, and once when she was singing for the royal family at Buckingham Palace, the Queen said to her, "I'm very like you in face and figure." Aunt Louisa cherished this compliment and often

repeated it, especially since the Queen stated it so modestly.

With William Harrison, Louisa received a splendid offer to go to America, which was fast becoming the shining Mecca for the English actor and writer, offering him the excitement of travel, adventure of various sorts, and the possibility of success and fortune, just as it does today.

They accepted at once, and sailed in August, 1854, on the steamship *Pacific,* and my aunt took with her her sister Susan and her mother and father. We all went down to the river to see them off, for the long journey was considered quite an undertaking. It took eleven days and five hours to cross the Atlantic.

I have to smile and wonder as I think of it now, and compare those slow voyages with the recent flight of the youthful Col. Lindbergh, and I have just completed a tour with the all-star cast of "Trelawney of the Wells," covering practically all of the states, from coast to coast, in less than four months, which in my first touring days in America

would have taken at least a year or two. That is one of the many compensations of old age, —to continue in good health at eighty-three, and to look back across time and space, marvelling at the progress of man. Step by step I have watched him speeding forward, faster and faster. Probably before I am called, I too shall be asked to board a passenger plane for another journey to England, flying swiftly over the dark waters that were so dreaded by my Aunt Louisa and by me, later on. Or am I too optimistic? Oh, I do not know. They say it will happen in ten years. At this stage of my life, ten years seem a very little time. Why, in ten years I'll be only ninety-three!

The steamship *Pacific* was anchored in the middle of the river, and we watched Aunt Louisa and my grandmother and grandfather crowd into a small boat filled with other passengers, and we waved our parasols at them as they were rowed away. I'll never forget that confusion,—the rocking boat, dipping and tipping,—the piled-up luggage,—the yelling of the rough seamen,—the sad moaning of my poor grandmother who was being

"And How We All Cried There On the Gray Docks"

taken along on account of her ill health, and the last fierce embraces and wet kisses. There were many reasons to make us believe that we might not see them again. The water was rough, and we held our breath, wondering if the little boat, so heavily loaded, would ever draw up alongside of the steamship. It did at last, and then I recall seeing the *Pacific* pull out and vanish like a dream down the misty river. And how we all cried there on the gray docks.

After my aunts had gone, Mother and we children went to live in the house my aunts owned in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, the aristocratic part of London, and after a short time there, off we were sent to a boarding school at Gravesend, Kent, under the supervision of some old cousins, the Misses Kidgells. There is something darkly Dickensian about that last sentence, but I assure you it was not, although it was at that very time that Charles Dickens was writing about the horrors of the English private school. My sister Susan and I were put to Miss Holbrook's school,—Joe, my oldest brother to a

boy's school near-by, and Herbert to one for very young children. The Miss Holbrook school was close to the river, having a view of the high cliffs and the beach, and I remember we often went shrimping when the tide was out, usually at sunset.

We remained happy and carefree at Gravesend until the year 1857 when my aunts returned from America, but before that time, my mother joined them. The Pyne and Harrison Opera Company had met with great success in the States, presenting in English such works as "Crown Diamonds," by Auber, "Fra Diavolo," "Sonnambula," and the very popular "Bohemian Girl." In 1855 they sent for my mother as they were obliged to take a long trip into the Southern States and they wanted some one to stay in New York with my grandfather and grandmother. Mother remained in America for about six months and gave several piano concerts. She was as well received in the new world as she had been in her own country.

Then she returned home, a truly glamorous figure to me, when in 1856, the year that saw

the end of the Crimean war, she sent for me to come to London to see the illuminations. Those were thrillings days, and I can vaguely recollect the bursting of fireworks and the wild excitement that prevailed everywhere over the peace that had come after several years of horrifying war.

Mother and I rode on a bus through the streets, the horses crawling like snails on account of the dense crowds. I suppose in comparison the festivities were quite flat considering such affairs today, but to me it was a glorious and unforgettable experience. With this mingled the joy of hearing from my own mother's lips the accounts of her success in America and her descriptions of that fascinating land which still had wild, uncivilized territories, and where great quantities of gold had been discovered in California only about seven years before.

The return of my aunts and grandparents from America was another exciting event, for we children were then able to attend various schools in London, one of them being the school of Mrs. Chapman, a sister of Mrs.

Charles Kean. Charles Kean, son of the famous actor Edmund Kean, was then lessee of the Princess theatre, and so Mrs. Chapman's scholars were often invited to visit the theatre and see Mr. and Mrs. Kean (Ellen Tree) acting in the classics. Needless to say, I was delighted to have this privilege, and in that way, when I was little more than twelve years old, I saw wonderful productions of "Macbeth," "The Tempest," "Richelieu," "King Lear," and many others, with great actors and actresses,—Kean himself, Mrs. Kean (Ellen Tree, long a favorite of mine), Harley, Kate Terry and Ellen Terry, whom I saw play the child apparition in "Macbeth." She must have been only ten years old. Also, I saw at this time the first English production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," called "A Slave's Life." Mrs. Stowe had not protected the dramatic rights of her famous novel, so there were many dramatizations, but the one I saw was the first really successful one in which George S. Howard played. His little daughter Cordelia was the little Eva and Mrs.

Aunt Louisa Pyne and Mrs. Thomas Whiffen in Her First "Old Lady" Part

Howard played Topsy. Howard appeared as St. Claire, and it was the universal opinion that he was the ideal Southern planter. He was the first of the "type" of Southern gentlemen with a wide-brim hat, goatee and long, light coat.

All these electrifying performances impressed me more than I can say, and increased my desire to tread the boards in any capacity, even though I *wouldn't* boo a goose!

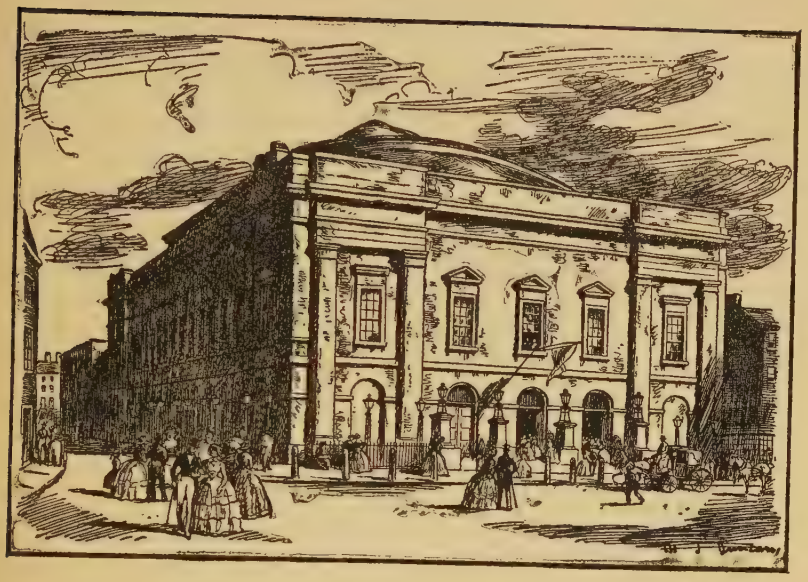
As was the custom in those days, and still is to a great extent, my sister Susan and I were sent to a very fine school in St. Omer, France, to learn the French language properly, and to this day I have such pleasant memories of the little town, and the good times we had there.

St. Omer was an old garrison town, very picturesque, and there were a great many French soldiers always about in their colorful uniforms. Every two weeks we had what were called "sortie" days, which were half holidays. We could then go to the kitchen and buy wine, a very ordinary claret, and very cheap. Also, a delicious little cake to go with

the wine called, "gauffres," quite simple, but tasting so good to us because they were different from our regular food. There were about twenty English girls to nearly three hundred French girls in the school. most of these being day scholars.

When we went out for a walk, which happened daily unless the weather was stormy, we walked three abreast with a governess at the side, every few yards. We were never allowed to walk two abreast or two girls could not play together. If we ever did, a voice would shrill out from somewhere, "Prenez une troisième, mademoiselles." I heard afterwards the idea was that two could keep a secret but three could not.

Susan and I were in France for about eighteen months, during which time my sister horrified my good Episcopalian family by desiring to become a Catholic. Most of the French girls at the school were Catholic, and Susan was carried away by the beauty of the services held in the open court of the school chapel, during the celebration of the Month of Mary, a time when the whole of St. Omer



Old Drury Lane Theatre

was a bower of roses. We were removed from the school at once, but those childish impressions remained with Susan and later bore fruit, as you shall see.

After we returned to England, my Aunt Louisa, who for that time must have been a remarkable business woman, continued in partnership with William Harrison, and together they leased the old Lyceum theatre, to present English opera in London. This was for the winter months, or rather what was called the season, which meant up to the end of May. They made money but found the theatre too small for their purpose, so the next year they leased Drury Lane theatre.

Wagner's music was just being talked about extensively, and the Prince Consort had told my aunt that she should try and procure "Lohengrin" for the Drury Lane. He thought it would be a success if sung in English. My aunt thought that it might too, so she decided to go to Vienna and see it performed. It is of interest to note that very production was the first Wagner himself had heard, since he was in exile when "Lohengrin" was first pro-

duced at Weimar under Liszt's direction on the 28th of August, 1850.

It being vacation, my aunt very kindly took me with her, but when we arrived in Paris, we learned that "Lohengrin" had been taken off the boards, so we turned around and came back. My Aunt Louisa, being such a famous singer and manageress, would naturally have met Wagner, and I have often regretted that ill chance that prevented me from witnessing such an interview.

After one year at Drury Lane, my aunt and Harrison were approached by William Gye of Covent Garden, who had an Italian opera season there for several months in the spring, but was willing to let them have the theatre for the rest of the year; and the upshot of this was that the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company occupied famous old Covent Garden for seven years.

The first four years the partnership made money, but most unfortunately they had just signed a lease for another three years when the Prince Consort died. This practically ruined them, for the Prince Consort and

Old Covent Garden

Queen Victoria had been their most liberal patrons, and of course the nobility had followed in their wake; but with the death of the Prince, no one went to the theatres, especially to the opera. Indeed, the Queen never entered a theatre again.

Night after night Covent Garden was almost empty. I was living with poor Aunt Louisa at this time, and used to go to the theatre with her for almost every performance. Many a time she would drape a gay opera cloak about my shoulders; cover my immature arms with long gloves; give me a fan to wave, languidly, and had me taken to one of the private boxes to sit there the whole evening, impersonating a grand lady attending the play. How I would act up there, in the shadow of the red curtains, holding my head so high that my neck would always be stiff the next morning. But those empty houses took away most of the fun. To a person of the theatre, it was truly a ghastly sight.

When I lived with my aunts in London, they were very fond of me and wanted to adopt me, but my mother would not consent

to that. Besides, mother thought she might have need of me at home, for my sister Susan, who was very pretty, had shown signs of a light but sweet soprano voice, and after much talk with the family, Mother decided to send her to Paris to study singing under Madame Ugalde, who at that time had a splendid reputation as a teacher.

Susan was gone for about eighteen months and on her return to England, was placed under Signor Schira, an old Italian who had been my Aunt Louisa's teacher. I also was placed under him for a time, as I had a contralto voice, not very powerful but rich,—at least they told me it was *rich.* However, Schira did not take much interest in me. My voice was not big enough and I was not pretty, which made a great deal of difference with Schira, so I had only a few lessons with him.

Nevertheless, I was a natural musician and it was thought I could be a good pianist. Bound to do something in that line, I worked hard and was given good teachers, and even played concerts, but it seemed that fate had another career mapped out for me. I found

that extreme nervousness, especially a peculiar trembling of the hands which I have to this day, interfered with my public performances as a pianist, and it was then that I suggested the stage as a profession, and received the answer from my aunt which I quote at the beginning of this chapter.

Of course, as a manageress of Covent Garden, my Aunt Louisa knew the managers of all the other theatres in London and could have easily procured me a position in one of their companies, a small place, naturally, for I only wanted to begin at the beginning, but my aunt was a peculiar, strong-willed woman with set ideas and would not help me. I was slightly discouraged, but I would not give up, continuing to study in my quiet, unemotional way, awaiting my opportunity. It was not long in coming.

CHAPTER II—*I Boo the Goose*

WHEN THE PYNE AND HARRISON company closed at Covent Garden after those last three heart-breaking years, Mr. Harrison leased Her Majesty's theatre in the Haymarket for a short season, and it was under his management that my sister made her début. Susan is mentioned so much in the very early part of my story because it was really on account of her that I received my first engagement in the theatre. Her voice rapidly improved and she learned several operas, working hard to fit herself for her début. She was quite successful with Harrison, although most of the critics agreed that she was too young and her voice, beautiful as it was, was not fully developed.

She played several times during the season, and was afterwards engaged to appear in light

opera at the Royalty theatre, and this was when my chance came. I was only eighteen months older than Susan, but mother would not let her accept the Royalty engagement unless they took me along as a chaperon. Oh, yes, those were the days of chaperons. No young girl ever thought of venturing out without a chaperon, especially into the mysteries of theatrical life. I was considered safe because I was the ugly duckling, and unlike the story, I never became a swan. I always remember overhearing the young men say as I sat with Susie at dances, "I'm going to dance with the Galton girl." When asked which one was referred to, the answer was always, "The pretty one," and the next moment Susie's ruffles were swirling in an old square dance, as I sat primly against the wall. So as chaperon I stepped into my first engagement, booing my aunt's goose.

I must say that bills at the theatres in those days were much longer than they are now. We commenced at seven-thirty and were seldom through until nearly twelve. I know that the bill at the Royalty began with a farce; was followed by a light opera in two acts, called

"Castle Grim," and closed with a burlesque with the amusing title, "Prince Amabel" or "Turko the Terrible." It was in this piece I made by début as the fairy, Rosatinta. I had only about four lines to speak at the opening of the burlesque and about the same number at the close, but I was more than happy to have obtained that much, for my gnawing ambition was being satisfied. Little did I dream then that sixty-odd years later I would still be playing.

One incident that happened during the run of "Prince Amabel," I still remember perfectly. My appearance as the fairy Rosatinta was made through a trap, pushed slowly into view from below on a sort of elevator worked by two men. One night, one of the stage hands was intoxicated and did not appear, so the other one tried to work the elevator by himself. Something went wrong as I was ascending with dignity, and suddenly I was raised so quickly that I was shot forth from the hole like a rabbit shooting from a burrow, a very ungainly entrance for a demure little fairy, to say the least. After I had spoken my four lines

"I'm Going to Dance with the Galton Girl"

I was supposed to descend into the trap again, but wild horses couldn't have driven me down on that elevator. Instead, I scampered off into the wings, a very frightened girl.

I shall digress here a moment to set down a picture that flashes up in my mind. It is not amiss in this place, for it happened only a short time after the death of the Prince Consort. The Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward the Seventh, became engaged to the Danish Princess Alexandra and the English people were wildly enthusiastic and delighted at the idea of this marriage. Of course, when Victoria was first married to Prince Albert, I was too young to note the attitude of the people, but as I grew older, I could not but notice that the marriage of their queen to a German was not looked upon with favor. In fact, sneering remarks were heard openly, and some of the newspapers said unkind things, in spite of the fact that Albert bore himself always in the most dignified fashion, never failing in his respect to the Queen and her slightest wish; never even offering his advice unless she asked for it. I think it was realized after his death

what a help he had been to Her Majesty, and how largely he had assisted her in governing her people without in the least seeming to do so. But this marriage of Edward to Alexandra was tremendously popular from the very first. I was one of the huge crowd that filled the streets of London when the royal Princess made her entry with the Prince, and to this day I remember the wild enthusiasm with which they were greeted. My sister Susan was living in Gravesend then and she was one of a group of pretty young girls selected to stand at the wharf at Tilsbury when the Princess disembarked, and throw flowers in her path as she walked to the railway station. The proud, regal Alexandra is dead now, but the perfume of those flowers over which she stepped still scents the air of my memory, and the cheering of the frenzied populace still reechoes across all those years. Although I had not met Mr. Whiffen then, I learned from him afterwards that he sang at the royal wedding in St. George's, Windsor.

For my work in "Prince Amabel" at the Royalty, I received thirty shillings a week, a

usual salary for a beginner, and after I had been in the company for a few weeks, Miss Fanny Reeves, who sang the contralto rôle in the opera, was taken ill, and I was asked to step into her place at a very short notice. These fictional opportunities happened to me frequently, mostly because I was a musician and singer as well as an embryo actress, and could be used in many capacities. I was also a quick study, and even now I can "get up" in a part in less time than the majority of young actors.

Soon after I was playing the fairy Rosatinta and singing the contralto rôle in the opera, the actress who was playing the principal part in the farce notified the manager on a Saturday night that she was ill and could not appear Monday, so again I was asked to step in and do the best I could with the rôle. I did so, and for a time was playing in all three pieces, quite a handful for a mere beginner, but the experience was invaluable.

CHAPTER III

Drawing Near to the Romance of My Life

SOON AFTER I WAS PLAYING AT the Royalty, but drawing near to the end of the first season, I one day saw an advertisement in the "Era" for a singing chambermaid in a stock company at Portsmouth for the summer. A singing chambermaid was the term used in those days for what was later called a soubrette. Where the term came from I do not know, except that in the early, early days most of the singing comedy parts were chambermaids or girls of all work.

Taking courage in my hands, I answered the advertisement saying I was a niece of Louisa Pyne, and to my surprise obtained the engagement. When my season was over in London I went to Portsmouth, feeling very strange and very much afraid. I was all alone and the thought of entering a troupe of experienced actors fairly turned me cold. I found I was to

open in "The Loan of a Lover," with a song which I happened to know. I don't believe I made much of a success except with the quaint old song which brought me some applause. However, I remained for two weeks playing various parts, among them being Sam Willoughby, a boy's part in "The Ticket of Leave Man." I was supposed to whistle throughout the performance which I never could do, so someone whistled in the wings for me as I pursed my lips. I also played Hecate in "Macbeth." All the parts were new to me and I had to study very hard to commit them to memory.

When I was approaching the end of my second week, the manager called me into his office and asked me if I would like to remain until the end of the season. He said he would be glad to have me do so at a reduction of salary, and all the members of the company would help me in any way possible. I told him I couldn't stay. I was too lonesome, never having been away from home before, and being quite new in the profession. He replied, "I saw that the first day you arrived." I was

rather surprised, but of course I should have known that he would, for in one of the operas I was supposed to speak the line, "The robbers entered into a dim cavern," but becoming nervous I said, "The robbers entered into a cim davern," and when the audience laughed and I heard the actors snickering in the wings, I cried desperately, "No, no, I mean the robbers entered into a dam civern!" Which only made the audience laugh the louder, and I felt like bursting into tears.

Indeed, every one in that little provincial company saw what a novice I was, but they were very kind and never by word or action made things uncomfortable for me. I left them with regrets and the warmest sort of regard for them in my heart.

At this time, up in London, Mr. German Reed had opened with an *entertainment* calculated to appeal to a class of people who wanted to be amused, but would not go into a regular theatre. This was absurd, but the prejudice existed to a great extent, so Mr. German Reed, being a shrewd man and one of foresight, thought out the idea of a musical

program which he called an entertainment instead of theatre, and found to his financial satisfaction that the public loved to be hoodwinked.

His company consisted of himself, his wife, who was well-known as Miss P. Horton, an actress and singer, and Mr. John Parry, an extremely clever pianist and mimic. Mr. Reed was a fine pianist himself, and there were many musicians who claimed he was as fine an exponent of Beethoven as anyone in those days.

Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's entertainment, as it was called, became quite the vogue. It was given in a hall in the Gallery of Illustrations, situated in the lower part of Regent Street, just below Regent Circus. The entertainment at this time was a protean play called, "The Family Legends," in which Mr. and Mrs. Reed and John Parry all took part, playing various characters.

One of these characters assumed by Mrs. Reed was a little Welsh girl with a song, accompanied on the stage by an old Welsh harpist, John Parry. This little play had been

going for some time, when Mrs. Reed began to think she was too old to play the little Welsh girl, so they engaged my sister, Susan, to do the part, and this brought us both in contact with these clever people, for later, when Mrs. Reed was taken ill, Mr. Reed asked me if my sister and I could divide the parts between us, which we did, and avoided, in that way, having to close the hall for a time.

When, after some weeks, my sister had to leave for a week to fulfill a contract she had made previously for some concerts in Scotland, I played all the female rôles, five of them, no less. Mrs. Reed recovered from her illness and came to see the performance. She was so well satisfied with me that she refused to return to the cast, so my sister and I remained in it until the end of the season.

The following season, a new play was produced called, "A Dream Prince." There was no part in it for me, but my sister was engaged and I went to the theatre with her as my mother was too tired to do so. She was still teaching the piano. This engagement with the

Sister Susan and Mrs. Whiffen (Right), when the Two Sisters Were Playing at the Royalty

German Reeds was a most delightful one. We did not play Saturday nights but gave Thursday matinées instead. Everything was done to make us comfortable. A dresser was provided and a room where we could rest on matinée days and have afternoon tea which was provided by the management.

We went on the road too, and it was during Christmas time of that year we were playing in a certain theatre in a certain small city, not a hundred miles from the Irish Sea. The Christmas pantomime was still running with a light opera playing before it. What opera it was on that particular night I refer to, I forget, but I remember that during the last act I was sitting in the green-room, waiting for my call and I saw the principal characters of the harlequinade come in. As usual they began getting into trim for their work by doing before the glass some of the pantomimic business which they were soon to act on the stage, especially the harlequin, whom I knew well.

He was a nice, kindly fellow, always cheerful and pleasant, particularly to the younger members of the company; always making

them laugh by some droll thing he did or said. Well, there he was before the large glass posturing and attitudinizing, much to our amusement. We soon noticed that his face was working too, and grimace followed grimace, until we laughed ourselves tired and told him he was taking away the clown's business. This went on for a few minutes, and then I saw that the tears were streaming down his face; still he went on with his twisting and his twirling. I went to him and asked, "What's the matter, Mr. Tanner?" On went the contortions of his body, faster than ever, and the tears fell faster still. He pulled the black mask of the harlequin quickly over his face, still keeping on with his exercising, and in a trembling voice, broken by sobs, gasped out, "My mother died this morning."

In my years of playing in the theatre, I have encountered many such cases of bravery, but none quite so poignant as this one.

Before closing this chapter and coming to a most important event in my life, my marriage to Mr. Thomas Whiffen, I must not forget to mention my connection with the fa-

mous Tussauds. When I lived with my aunts in London, they had the upper part of a house in Baker Street, Portman Square, and right opposite to us was the building which housed Mme. Tussaud's wax works, a unique entertainment, known the world over, even then. In fact, when I was a girl, the old and original Mme. Tussaud was not living. Her granddaughter was carrying on the business and used to work on the wax figures herself, doing the fine work of eyebrows and eyelashes, and used to wear a mask.

I remember well the wax figure of old Mme. Tussaud standing among the exhibits, dressed in a quaint old gown and with an odd pokebonnet on her head, looking very real and very wise. We children used to play around the wax works and in the work rooms among the swathed figures that stood patiently awaiting for missing legs and arms and even heads. They were most lifelike and used to terrify me as a child, especially the gleaming eyes that seemed to follow you about.

There were wax figures of all the crowned heads of Europe from almost the beginning,

up to Victoria's reign, and there was the chamber of horrors that was most ghastly. The establishment burned two or three times, the last conflagration being just recently, but I understand they are hopefully rebuilding. Our family knew the Tussauds so well that when the Mme. Tussaud of my girlhood died, we all went into complimentary mourning, a custom quite common then.

But to get on to the one and only romance of my life. Sounds old-fashioned, doesn't it? Well, I admit I am, and maybe I'm a tiny bit proud of the fact.

CHAPTER IV—Mr. Whiffen

AT THE CLOSE OF MY SISTER'S season with the German Reeds and my season of playing and chaperoning, Mr. Reed suggested that Susan should "take a benefit," a custom prevalent in those days for those who had made themselves liked by the public. Mr. Reed had for two or three years previous been giving light opera during the summer months, with a small company, one member of which was a young and talented tenor named Thomas Whiffen. We were told that he would be willing to help out my sister with any musical part of her benefit program. This was a very generous gesture since the young man was not known to us. A splendid bill of musical numbers was put together, the principal feature of which was Offenbach's "Lischen and Fritzchen." My sister and Mr. Thomas Whiffen played the two parts.

I used to go to the hall with my sister to

help rehearse the little play, accompanying the singers on the piano, and in this way I made the acquaintance of my future husband, little realizing it at the time, although I must admit that Mr. Whiffen attracted me from the first. Of course, I didn't believe he would ever look at me, especially when pretty Susan was there, and I being a well-bred lady of that proper day and age concealed all my emotions regarding the opposite sex, naturally!

The benefit was a success, and as Mr. Reed very kindly gave us the hall free of rent, we made some money. In the meantime, my Aunt Louisa conceived the idea of making a tour of England and Scotland with a small company of singers. There was to be no scenery except the curtains so as to avoid being classed as a theatrical organization, the Scotch people being most averse to the so-called real theatre, little knowing that at that very time they were nursing two young men destined to become world famous in that profession, Sir Harry Lauder and Sir James Barrie.

Mr. Whiffen had done so well at Susan'

benefit that he was instantly engaged as the tenor of our little troupe. Then there was my sister, my Aunt Susan, who had a strong contralto, my Aunt Louisa with her matchless soprano, a young baritone and myself. It was an unusually good singing company and made a success wherever it went, playing light operas without a chorus, and some farces. During the time, Mr. Whiffen and I became engaged and arranged to be married as soon as the season was over.

I think I shall pause at this point and speak a little about the career of Mr. Whiffen up to this time. He was a very well-known man both in England and America, and there are many old theatre-goers who will be interested in a few memories of him, I'm sure.

Mr. Whiffen did not come from a theatrical family as I did, but when he was only seven years old he went to the Rochester, Kent, cathedral and became a choir boy. He remained in that sleepy old cathedral town, not far from Canterbury, until he was about sixteen years old when his voice broke and he

was of no more use as a choir boy. It is of interest to know that Arthur Sullivan, he of Gilbert and Sullivan fame, attended the same cathedral at the same time as my husband, although he was older and left there before Mr. Whiffen did. It was probably there that he received the inspiration for such pieces as "The Lost Chord" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers," musical compositions that we seldom attribute to the composer of "Pinafore," "Mikado," "Patience," etc. Later I shall speak of Arthur Sullivan again when he became world famous. He was always a good friend of my husband.

After Mr. Whiffen's voice broke he went as a clerk in the Clearing House in London where he clerked for about three years, but he could not stand the confinement of indoors. Hearing of a tenor position in the cathedral of Litchfield, he was given a trial which proved to be successful. His voice as a child had been a contralto but it changed to tenor, something more or less unusual. He was glad to be out of the Clearing House on account of his health and stayed at Litchfield until he

heard of a position in the old cathedral at Rochester, Kent, where he had served as a child. For sentimental reasons he preferred to sing there, so he tried for that position and was accepted. There is now a plaque in that cathedral to the memory of my husband, on the stairs where the little choir boys go down to change their surplices.

Near Gad's Hill, Rochester, Mr. Whiffen met the immortal Charles Dickens and came to know him very well. In fact, Dickens made the name of Whiffen famous in "Pickwick Papers," into which he introduces the fat town crier of Eatanswill as Whiffen. You remember how Eatanswill was torn up with excitement over the political contest of Fizkin and Slumkly, how the rival factions got into a fight and forced, unwillingly, Mr. Pickwick into it, although he had committed no greater offense than to try and shout with the biggest crowd. Finally things became so unruly that the Mayor's attendants roared for silence. "Whiffen, proclaim silence," said the Mayor. In obedience to this command, the crier performed another concerto on the bell, where-

upon a gentleman in the crowd called out, "Muffins" which occasioned another laugh.

The Whiffen thus immortalized was Thomas Whiffen's grandfather. "The Bull" at Rochester was the inn made memorable in "Pickwick," and Dickens when a boy used to consider it the grandest hostelry that could be imagined. It was natural that Rochester and its hostelry should figure so conspicuously in "The Pickwick Papers."

Mr. Whiffen used to describe to me, with graphic detail, the anniversary dinner of the Royal Society of Musicians at which Dickens presided on one occasion. Near him sat Bulwer-Lytton and not far away, among other members of the society, was my Tom, drinking in every word. He could repeat Dickens' speech verbatim and, illustrating the grace with which the great man of those days turned the now obnoxious pun, told of his allusions to the founders of the Royal Society. Two good souls, musicians, saw two poor sons of a deceased musician driving milch goats along the streets and were moved to grant them aid; "and there came to their aid," he said, "an-

other soul with but one Handel to his name."

Mr. Whiffen maintained that Dickens was a mild drinker. In the language of an admirer, he enjoyed the making of the punch and the pouring of it out, but he cared little for the drinking of it. In England then, they had at all banquets professional toast-makers, who called out the toasts in stentorian tones, and Dickens never ceased to laugh at the pompous gentlemen who served in that capacity.

Of course there was a great deal of gossip among his neighbors about Dickens' family trouble, and it was pretty generally conceded that Mrs. Dickens was needlessly jealous. Tom often told me that Dickens' god-daughter was one of the causes of jealousy. The young lady was with the novelist a great deal, and was in his company in the railway accident when the coach in which they sat hung down, suspended by its coupling over a bridge. He never recovered from the nervous shock that he then sustained.

A little incident occurred to arouse Mrs. Dickens' anger, due to the blunder of a jeweler who occupied in London much such

a position as does Tiffany in New York. Mrs. Dickens called there one day and the jeweler informed her that her bracelet was ready. She had ordered none, and when she discovered that her husband had done so, and that it was not for her, she was indignant. It proved to be a bracelet belonging to the god-daughter, which Mr. Dickens had left to be repaired.

For three years Mr. Whiffen served in Rochester, but hearing of a better place in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, he took advantage of his vacation time to try for that and was given the position. The pay was higher and of course to sing at St. George's was considered quite a distinction. He was paid about seventy pounds a year and they gave him a house in the cloisters and furnished him with coal. Besides being a singer, Mr. Whiffen was a good violinist, and as soon as he came to Windsor he was made a member of the Queen's Private Orchestra, which played in the Queen's drawing-room every evening after dinner, at Windsor Castle, during the summer months. Many an amusing story my husband used to tell about the Queen's little eccentrici-

ties during those concerts, one of them being her aversion to a draught. They were a positive horror to her and she would even stop the orchestra, in the middle of a selection, to find that draught and close it out before she could listen to the music with any comfort.

Mr. Whiffen often dined at the castle in the steward's room, where only the highest attaches of the palace were admitted. There was a great how-d'-do when John Brown, the Queen's favorite servant, was admitted to the company of that select room. John was merely a Scotch gilly, who used to serve the Prince Consort on his hunting trips and sleep at his door at night like a dog. The Prince was for having him come to Windsor, but the Queen held that he would be out of place there among the other servants and would not hear of it; but when the Prince died the Queen sent for the faithful attendant, who, on his arrival, was looked down upon by the other attendants. Even so important a personage as the Scotch piper of the royal band was not allowed to eat in the steward's room, but eventually Brown was accorded that honor, and

with a Scotchman's loyalty to his countrymen, he soon had the piper promoted to the same room.

Mr. Whiffen sang in the Chapel at ten in the morning and at four in the afternoon, and one day, Mr. German Reed, happening to hear him sing, was so impressed that he wanted him for the small operas he was just introducing in England, as I have stated before this. He sent Mr. Whiffen a letter to meet him at Slough Junction, as he had something important to talk to him about, and there made his proposal. Mr. Whiffen was engaged at the Chapel, of course, but he said he would rehearse and try out, as he had never done this sort of work before. He did so, and made a fine impression on Mr. German Reed.

When it came to playing in London, Tom had to leave the Chapel after the four o'clock service; play in London in the evening and return the next morning for the ten o'clock service. It was a hard schedule, so when he found his position was assured in London, he went to the Dean at St. George's and wanted to resign, but he was told he was sworn in for

life, as was the custom then. However, knowing one of the canons intimately, Lord Russel, it was, he appealed to him and finally got away. He went to London immediately and began his regular career, where fate soon threw us together.

When he met me, Mr. Whiffen was engaged to another girl in London whose mother had constantly put off the marriage until it seemed quite hopeless, and Mr. Whiffen was discouraged and unhappy. After he had taken a notion to me, he did not speak of his love until he honorably asked his fiancée once more to marry him, but again her mother procrastinated, so he broke off the engagement.

In Scotland he proposed to me and I accepted. I never had a love letter from Mr. Whiffen during our engagement because we were always on the road together from the time of his proposal until our marriage. But after we were man and wife, during our separations in America while he was playing in one company and I was playing in another, I had many love letters which I still treasure.

What lovely days those were,—those days

of our new love in the beautiful country of Scotland. Tom and I used to take long walks into the heather-purpled hills, and this time Susan was the chaperon, my two aunts being too stout to walk very much. At noon we would stop at little Scotch inns by the roadside for scones and claret, and come wandering back in the soft evenings with the tinkle of sheep bells in our ears. Tom first got me to reading Dickens, and helped me over the sad places by telling me that there was always a laugh beyond the tears.

CHAPTER V—The First Trip to America

SHORTLY AFTER MY ENGAGEment to Mr. Whiffen, mother had an offer for us to come to America and present our light operas. This was considered a big opportunity, so we made up the company at once, consisting of my mother as musician and manageress, Sister Susan, Mr. Whiffen and myself, and Mr. W. Hart Conway. This gentleman had a charming baritone voice and was a good actor. My aunts were getting too old to go and decided to remain in London, teaching. We gave several performances round about London to show the manager who was engaging us, Mr. Sam Colville, the style of our entertainment, and he was quite enthusiastic, feeling sure we would have a big success in the States. We signed a contract to appear at Wood's theatre at Broadway and 30th street, afterwards Daly's theatre.

Before leaving England, I was married to Mr. Whiffen, July 11, 1868, at St. Andrew's, Wells Street. Mr. Whiffen had sung in the choir there at some previous time, so we had a choral wedding. The church was packed, and several prominent men, John Parry amongst them, put on surplices and sang in the choir. Arthur Sullivan wrote a new anthem for the occasion.

It is my belief that many people who came to the church thought it was my sister who was to be the bride, as she was the best known and the pretty one. She was already engaged to Mr. Alfred Kelleher, also a singer, but they were not married until we had been in America some time, which was disastrous for us, as you shall see.

Just prior to our coming to this country, Mr. Whiffen, by accident, met Dickens again, and I was with him, so I was introduced to the great novelist for the first and only time. I remember him very well. He was very gray then and lined, but very kindly and charming.

We encountered him on a little flowery lane in Rochester, driving along in a basket car-

"Dalby Tells Me You Are Going to America"

riage, and he pulled up to say, "Dalby tells me you are going to America." Mr. Whiffen answered in the affirmative, whereat he remarked with a twinkle, "I hope you'll make as much money over there as I did." We laughed at that, for we poor actors had no reason to expect such good fortune, as he had, during the five months he was there, made a hundred thousand dollars.

I was struck quite dumb in his great presence and could only smile shyly and curtsey, and then he drove away, bobbing up and down in his little basket carriage. As he turned up the little lane toward Gad's Hill, he turned and waved to us, and then the hedgerows hid him from our sight.

I was, and still am, a very bad sailor, and naturally I dreaded the long ocean voyage to America, especially since I remembered a terrific spell of seasickness I had experienced while crossing the Channel coming from school in France, and had to be carried from the boat to the shore.

Our steamship was called the *City of Boston,* of the Inman line, and we stopped at

Queenstown, Ireland, for the mail. Even after riding that short distance, I was feeling so bad that my husband made me get off in a tender and go for a ride in an old jaunting car in Queenstown, thinking the change would do me good. I was better as soon as I touched land, but back on the ship again the dreadful malady began its work. In those days the boats were quite crude and lacked so many of the comforts of today. There were no deck chairs, only wooden benches, and on these hard seats I used to lie in great agony, until we encountered heavy rains, and then I was forced down to my stuffy cabin, carried by poor Tom, who must have been pretty disgusted, since this trip was really our honeymoon. However, he did not complain. His solace must have been his beloved violin, for often I could hear him pouring out his heart to it in mournful dirges, addressed to the wind and the rain.

The journey took thirteen days and most of the way we buffeted a nasty sea. Toward the finish of it, I was laid on mattresses on the deck, side by side with Mr. Hart Conway, our baritone, who was in the same deplorable

condition as myself. How comical we two must have looked, although I assure you we did not feel the least bit amusing. Sometimes we would turn our heads and look at each other; groan woefully, and turn away again, sickened, I suppose, by the other's pasty face. I'm sure Mr. Whiffen couldn't have been the least bit jealous.

On the 18th of August, 1868, we arrived at New York harbor and were taken off in a tender. Our little troupe, strangers in America, felt much as the Pilgrim Fathers must have felt when they landed, for there was no one to meet us, not even an Indian, and as matters turned out, there was no one even aware of our coming.

We knew where Wood's theatre was located, and drove there in an open carriage, arriving to find it a museum and theatre combined, and there was Maggie Mitchell's name and photographs in the character of Fanchon, all about, but not a mention of us. We looked at each other with sinking hearts, for we understood that all arrangements had been made by Mr. Colville on the other side; and then

Mr. Wood came hustling out to our carriage, surprise written all over his face, as he had heard nothing about our engagement. What a picture we would make now, that carriage filled with English actors in the quaint clothes of the period, bewildered and frightened by this unexpected turn of luck, bobbing our heads and gesticulating at the florid Mr. Wood who gesticulated back at us from the sidewalk below. I remember the hearty indignation of my mother, who was really the manageress of the company, and how she spoke in no uncertain terms from the dignity of her high perch in the open carriage, grasping an umbrella in her hand. I remember too my own personal feelings when I discovered that America had not yet given up crinolines, and as they had done so in England I had bought a complete wardrobe of the polonaise style. To women readers, at least, I do not have to explain how I felt.

Mr. Wood was just as upset as we were and tried to be as helpful as possible. It was Mr. Colville who was the real villain of our first performance in America. Mr. Wood recom-

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Whiffen when They First Came to America in 1868

mended to us the old Coleman House, the only European hotel in town, and there we took rooms until we could decide what to do. It was a very trying situation, for we knew no one in America, and were afraid to take the case up in the courts as at that time theatrical people were always mistrusted and got the worst of it when it came down to a question of law.

Later that same day, we showed Mr. Wood our contracts signed by Colville, in which we were supposed to receive a percentage of the money taken in, but Mr. Wood objected to that because with the combination of museum and theatre he could not tell who came into the museum or who came into the play. After a long and heated argument, with my mother quite hysterical, it was decided that we would play six matinées, including Saturday, which Maggie Mitchell graciously gave up to us. We were paid three hundred dollars a week for the whole company, out of which we paid Mr. Conway forty or fifty dollars.

Our opening bill was Offenbach's "Marriage by Lanterns," in which I spoke the open-

ing lines. We closed the bill with "Lischen and Fritzchen," the opera with two rôles that so well suited my sister Susan and my husband. The entertainment in the museum commenced at eleven o'clock A.M. with an exhibition of the living curiosities, among whom were the Siamese Twins (the original ones), Sophia Ganz, the dwarf, and General Grant, Jr. The theatrical performances began at two with an inaugural address by P. T. Barnum. I saw the great Barnum quite a few times, but I never had the pleasure of meeting him.

Small operas, such as we gave, were a novelty in America and should have caused some attention, but because of the lack of advertising we did not draw much business, so when the famous burlesque queen, Lydia Thompson, and her troupe were scheduled to appear at the same house, Mr. Henderson, the house manager, wanted to cut out our Saturday matinées and give them over to the better known and more sensational performers. If we had allowed them to do this, our salary would have been cut accordingly, so we objected and left the management of Mr. Wood.

Lydia Thompson, engaged in England by Samuel Colville, just as we had been, but without the same results, made her American début in "Ixion" preceded by "To Oblige Benson." Miss Thompson was about thirty-two years old at this time and had been a great favorite at the Haymarket theatre in London. The younger Dumas once wrote a play for her. She attained tremendous success in America and when she appeared in the burlesque of "The Forty Thieves," she was a sensation. I saw her once and she impressed me as a charming actress who played burlesque with the finesse of high comedy and was *never* offensive in any way.

But to get back to ourselves. We had moved from the Coleman House to an American plan hotel on Union Square, a comfortable place with good food, and some other English actors were there which helped to drive away homesickness that attacked us frequently, in spite of the fact that New York was at that time one of the most picturesque cities we had ever seen. There were no cars on Broadway, just horse buses, big and lumbering. We would

wander up to Twenty-third Street, which was very far uptown then, and looking down Broadway, were enchanted by the uneven skyline of two- and three-story buildings, and the flow of the broad street, well named Broadway. There were horse cars on Fourth Avenue and on Sixth. Beyond Twenty-Third Street was a wild region of squatters and other undesirables. Forty-second Street was practically in the country, and saloons stood on the site of the Grand Central station. I can remember seeing cows being driven around to pasture up on Fifth Avenue.

After closing with Wood, an English comedian and impersonator named Lingard, who had arrived from the other side quite unheralded, got in touch with us to play with him in his theatre far down on Broadway, called the Opera Comique. Mrs. Lingard was with him, a most beautiful blonde actress, stately and emotional. Later she developed into a fine actress, due to her seriousness of purpose and hard study. The Lingards came into our lives a great deal as we continued acting in America. We played our short operas with them at

the Opera Comique, and Lingard gave his impersonations and character sketches between acts.

We were more successful here and had settled down for a long run, when our engagement was cut short by one of the numerous theatre fires that were such a menace during those days of old wooden theatres that burned like paper boxes. We were playing an opera called, "Chi-Chow-Hi," by Offenbach, that called for elaborate oriental costumes. These were all lost in the fire.

Up to this time Mother's management could scarcely be called a great success, and we often twitted her about it, and when things became hopelessly muddled, at times, I would ask Tom to step in and help her out, but he would shake his head like an old sage and say, "No, dear, she's *your* mother. Let her go ahead." You see, he was an extremely wise man. Dear Mother was a domineering type of English woman and Tom, being a musician, hated discord more than anything else. So he intently played his violin and said nothing.

CHAPTER VI—

The English Troupe Breaks Up

AFTER OUR DISASTROUS ENgagement with Lingard, we were persuaded to go to Philadelphia, and about Christmas time we opened at the Seventh Street Opera House, a small theatre, dirty and old. I recollect how depressed we were during those holidays, the first most of us had spent away from England where so much is made of the Yuletide spirit. Here there were no Christmas carols sung in the snowy streets, —no boar's head, or pudding flaming in brandy. At least these things were not for us, and to make matters worse, we opened our engagement with sixty dollars in the house.

But within a few nights the tide of luck changed, and by Saturday we were playing to capacity. You see, it had gotten out that my grandmother was a direct descendant of

Elisabeth Fry, and Philadelphia was very much a Quaker settlement. The capacity houses did not mean a great deal, however, for the theatre only seated about seven or eight hundred. We continued to play to such big business that Mother took over the Chestnut Street Theatre, and Mr. Kelleher, my sister's fiancé, came over to join us. That was in April, 1869.

By that time, business had slackened in Philadelphia, so our company took to the road, but left me behind as I was about to become a mother. A daughter was born to me, a frail little creature. We christened her Mary Blanche. Mr. Whiffen did not see his first baby until I joined him in New Orleans about six weeks later.

I found the company enjoying a big success in New Orleans. It seems that the Creoles had been offended by something that had happened in the theatre and had stayed away, but they took a fancy to our entertainment and returned in great numbers to see us. There were many of them in that far delta city at that time and their approval meant success.

Sunday was the theatre-going day for the Creoles, but as we were all strict Episcopalians we did not want to play on the Sabbath, but we were told we would lose about eighteen hundred dollars if we did not, so we played, although much against our will. Money meant too much to us then.

It was also in New Orleans that my sister became a Catholic, which goes back again to the impressions of the little girl in the French school at St. Omer during the lovely ceremony of the Month of Mary. Of course, the fact that Mr. Kelleher was a Catholic helped matters along. My mother was very angry and when my sister was married she refused to attend the wedding and forbade me to go, but I told her that I wouldn't think of letting Susan marry without any members of her family in the church.

Susan was not married until we had returned to Philadelphia. In fact, we did not know she had joined the Catholic Church until we had arrived in that Quaker city. So one morning, early, Tom and I went to see Susan married by a priest before an altar beautiful

with candles and lilies. Susan never looked more lovely and had never seemed happier.

When we returned from the church, Mother came to see Tom and me, attired completely in black,—black gown, black-jet earrings and a string of black-jet beads around her neck. Her face was drawn and stern. I asked her the reason for this and she replied in a cold, strange voice, proud head high, "I am in mourning for my daughter."

Mr. Whiffen and I laughed at this, but she was firm and tight-lipped, saying with dreadful finality, "She is dead to me from now on!"

My mother kept her word and did not see Susan for some years, really not until Susan's first child was born. I'm sure the old lady suffered much because of her stubborn pride, as she was always so proud of Susan's ability and personal charm. It was I who finally persuaded her to see her new granddaughter and incidentally Susan.

As soon as Susan married she decided to leave the stage, which came as a great blow to us, although we could not really blame her. However, Susan had agreed, when we left

England, that she would stay with the little troupe for three years, and there was some feeling about her leaving us before that time. You see, with her talent and her young beauty, my sister was really the drawing card of our company, and we knew that there was no one who could take her place. We had many serious arguments but finally came to the conclusion that we would have to disband. This was very hard on all of us, as we had made very little money up to date, what with the expenses of travel and production. Besides, we all were very sorrowful at the thought of separating in a country that was still strange to us. After all, the company was really a little family, and this seemed like the breaking of the last tie that bound us together.

To add to our troubles, Mary Blanche, my first born, died in Philadelphia, shortly after my sister's marriage. The rigors of travel on the road had weakened her baby constitution. We had not the money to afford a lot in the cemetery, so a friend we had made in Philadelphia generously offered us a bit of ground. There Mary Blanche was buried, and then

Tom and I made our way back to New York. The rest of the little disbanded troupe scattered. Susan and her husband went to Chicago and later to San Francisco. Mr. Hart Conway, because his voice had given him some trouble, had left us before this. Mother went on toward New York, intending to return to England, but meeting with Horace Lingard, she accepted an engagement with him and started on a western tour.

Tom and I arrived in New York with about twenty-five dollars in our purse, seedy in dress, and out of work. The death of our baby had crushed us, and Tom, worried about my health, asked me to give up the stage and let him earn the living for awhile. "No, Tom," I said, "I don't want to be laid away on the shelf. I want to keep on working in the theatre."

"All right, old girl," Tom answered. He understood. We went out together to find a place. That is always the way I have felt about it. Being laid away on a shelf has never interested me, although often the way has seemed almost too hard to bear.

CHAPTER VII—*A Romantic Incident*

OUR FIRST ENGAGEMENT AFTER the breaking up of our little troupe was with a Mr. Oates, in Albany. A few years later, Mr. William H. Crane made his début with this same company. Our engagement did not last very long, as Mr. Oates was one of the old-fashioned stage directors who ranted a great deal and became needlessly excited at rehearsals. I was on the stage with some other young women, taking direction from Mr. Oates, when he began to swear outrageously. Not being used to that sort of thing, since all the directors in the companies I had played were gentlemen, I became hysterical and began to cry. As we came off the stage, Mr. Whiffen noticed my tears, and finding out the trouble, he went to Mr. Oates for an explanation. The two men expostulated together, and Tom was told that I was not being sworn at,

"But," added the choleric little man, "if you don't like it you know what you can do!" My husband replied, "Yes, we can leave." And we did. Tom's pride always came before food and drink. We returned to New York by the old Albany night boat.

Our next engagement was at Lina Edwin's theatre, where we staged a burlesque about the famous robber, Jack Sheppard, called, "Little Jack Sheppard." It was not a success so we left and went to Boston to play at the Adelphi, Stetson's theatre, where we played in repertoire. We were boarded and lodged by a Miss Fisher, well known to the theatrical profession, a charming, gracious lady who served us faithfully for many years. William Warren, the noted actor, always boarded at Miss Fisher's. He was quite the idol of Boston and was received in society there, a rare thing for an actor in those days.

My husband had a strange premonition at this time, for one night, after finishing a performance at the Adelphi, he walked out the stage-door beside me, carrying a bundle of clothes under his arm. They were his costumes

for that week's play. I can hear myself asking him now, in surprise, just why he was doing such a thing, and I can see his smile as he said, cryptically, "Oh, I don't know. Tomorrow's Sunday and I just don't feel like leaving them, that's all."

We had quite an argument because he insisted upon walking through the streets of proper Boston with all those gay clothes under his arm, and into the hotel lobby where so many staid people sat about. "Have you no pride about you, Tom?" I insisted. "Take them back to the theatre, and stop being such a goose!" But he tenaciously refused.

No sooner had we gotten into our rooms and had sat down to our usual, after-the-theatre supper, when a boy rushed up to tell us that the Adelphi theatre was in flames. Mr. Whiffen went at once to the theatre but was not permitted to enter the burning building to rescue my wardrobe and a jewel case I had left there. When I saw him very early the next morning, he reported the loss of my property and then walked to his costumes hanging in a closet and held them up before me. He

smiled his cryptic smile. It was positively uncanny.

After the theatre was burned we naturally had no place to play so we travelled up into Maine giving short programs of music. The theatres, or town halls, in that back country all burned kerosene instead of gas, and were most primitive in every respect. Also, the audiences were primitive, and in most cases did not understand our programs as most of our music was gleaned from the classics. It was winter and dreadfully cold, so the tour was soon over.

In the spring of '71, I received a letter from Mother. It was from the South where she was playing with Lingard. She asked me if I wouldn't come down and join them as an accompanist to Mr. Lingard. Mother was doing that then, but the travel of one-night stands was proving too much for her, and she wanted someone to relieve her. Mother was not young any more and she yearned for England.

I decided to go, as Mr. Whiffen had signed a contract to appear with the Parepa Rosa company, an English opera troupe, very well

known, and there was no place for me. This was really the first engagement we had accepted that separated us since our marriage, and I tell you it was not easy. We debated it a long time before we could decide, but we knew it was inevitable.

Joining Lingard again, I found him the same, small, nervous man, and Mrs. Lingard just as beautiful and romantic, studying hard all the time, and so ambitious to get ahead that she was an inspiration. It was my duty to accompany Horace Lingard in his popular song-sketches. These songs were very difficult to follow, as Lingard would pause in various places to insert topical patter and then quickly go on with the song. It took lots of practice to follow him skillfully, and he was rather temperamental. Still I was able to please him. Songs that were introduced by him at this time were, "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines," and an equally popular song called, "Walking Down Broadway." A list of Lingard's sketches might be amusing to give an idea of the taste of the public in the early seventies: "Republic vs. Monarchy." Double sketch, representing at

MRS. HORACE LINGARD

the same moment, both King and President. "Upper ten—Old Muddlebrain." Grand opera in ten minutes. "Frenchman's Blunder," or "Perils of a Boarding House." "The Ball Room Pet." "Young Girl of the Day." "Lady Lily Graceful" (three female impersonations), concluding with the grand impersonations of the world's celebrities: the meeting of the Emperors Alexander II, of Russia, Francis Joseph I, of Austria, and William I, of Germany. The Shah of Persia; Don Carlos, of Spain; the two Napoleons; Horace Greeley; President Grant; Edwin Forrest; Carl Schurz; Ben Butler and Captain Fry!

During the year, General Grant and Horace Greeley were running for the presidency of the United States, and Lingard impersonated the two famous men. Many a time, by just standing in the wings, I could tell the situation by the amount of applause each impersonation received as Lingard poked his head through the curtains after each lightning change, but most generally it was the black-whiskered face with the black cigar that brought most of the shouting and stamping

and applause. Greeley was the butt of all jokes and caricatures although he was well liked. It seems that he himself did not relish the idea of being president. Grant was still the great hero. You must remember that the Civil War was not many years behind us then. I remember, too, the many exciting electoral parades of firemen and soldiers that enlivened the gas-lit streets of many large cities as we travelled about the country.

Another incident apropos here was concerned with a man named John Clark, who joined us after I had been with Lingard a few months. He was a Northerner and objected to a line about Dixie and a bar of Dixie music that Mr. Lingard used in one of his patter songs, and would not go on the stage until the line was omitted. In all my experience of war and its results, I had never before encountered such bitterness as I found everywhere in America after the war of the North and the South.

Continuing with Lingard, I played in Chicago two weeks after the great fire of '71, which was all blamed on a poor old cow. I

recall how dreadful the city looked, one section of it so littered with debris that I could not recognize a single street. The ruins were still smoking in many places. However, Lingard's business was good as the people wanted to find a laugh after such a tragedy, and Lingard gave them farces and his humorous impersonations in an improvised theatre near the lakeside.

A very charming and romantic thing happened while I was still with Lingard,—something that could not possibly happen in this commercial age. My blood runs quicker even now when I think about it. I had not seen Mr. Whiffen for some time, but of course we wrote many letters and we knew each other's itinerary as well as it was possible to know the itinerary of any troupe at that uncertain time.

In the winter of that year, it was understood that during the same week, Mr. Whiffen would be playing with the Parepa Rosa company in Cincinnati, Ohio, and I would be playing with Lingard in St. Louis. This would bring us fairly close together, but I saw no

way in which we could see each other since we were both playing every night. However, there's an old saying about true love never being daunted, and so you can imagine my great surprise and joy when I received word in my hotel that Tom Whiffen was waiting below to see me. When he came up he stood before me with drawn face, tousled hair and quite breathless, but what alarmed me most was the condition of his clothes which were rapidly stiffening from being drenched with ice-cold water.

It seems that he found the Parepa Rosa repertoire so arranged that over the week-end he could get away for a few days, so he determined to give me a surprise by getting somehow to St. Louis. He left Cincinnati on a night train and got into St. Louis in the early morning. Of course, the Mississippi lay between us, and the river was frozen. It was the custom to run buses over the ice, but as luck would have it, the ice had been broken by a thaw so that the buses could not cross, and the ice was not sufficiently freed to permit the ferry boats to run.

Tom was quite desperate as he knew he had only a limited time to stay with me, so he walked the Mississippi bank searching for some means by which to cross. It seemed hopeless. There were no bridges then, and the broken and menacing ice stretched for miles. The morning was freezing and gray with a promise of more snow any minute. The few people Tom encountered told him he had better give up. When he told them he had to see his wife, they laughed at him. If it were a sweetheart, that would be different, but a wife, —well, he ought to be glad the river was between them! Tom thought differently.

Just when all seemed hopeless and Tom began to believe he would have to turn back, he saw a lumber yard on the bank of the river, and an idea struck him. Perhaps it wasn't original,—probably he got it from Mrs. Stowe's famous Eliza, but at any rate, he paid some one a dollar for a big plank and bore it down to the edge of the river. Mumbling some sort of prayer, he threw the plank across to a chunk of ice. The ice wobbled but held, and balancing himself Tom crept out. Standing

on the perilous cake of ice, he dragged the plank up; threw it to another floe over to the other side, slipping and crawling, sometimes dropping into black water up to his waist, until he was drenched and cold to the marrow of his bones. People standing on the banks and watching him thought he had gone mad. He ran all the way to the hotel feeling his clothes stiffening in the cold morning breeze.

You will understand when I tell you he seemed very like one of the ancient heroes as he stood before me, and I burst into tears and held him close in my arms in spite of the dripping, ice-cold clothes. The Lingards were at the same hotel, so Tom borrowed a suit of Lingard's, and since the impersonator was a short man, and my husband was of a fairly good size, you can imagine how comical my valiant knight appeared. However, we had our meals in the hotel rooms, upstairs, and Tom's clothes were soon dry.

How happy we were to see each other again and how long we talked over our tea, telling each other our experiences since we had been apart. I told him many little amusing things

about the Lingards, and he told me a funny story that happened with the Parepa Rosa company. It seems that Parepa Rosa's mother died while they were playing in Boston, and the stage manager being called up to make a speech about the sad happening to the audience, concluded with "accidents will happen in the best-regulated families."

I continued with the Lingards and Tom went back to Parepa Rosa. As the season progressed, serious plays were produced for Mrs. Lingard, who was becoming a fine actress, and of course her blonde beauty and fine, Venus-like figure were histrionic attributes. The Lingards were very amusing together. Mrs. Lingard was always reading romantic poetry, and often I would hear her exclaim in husky tones to her husband, "Oh, Willie, listen to this!" And flourishing a gilt-edged, red-plush volume of Tennyson, she would recite with many sighs and gestures, "Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O Sea,—and I would that my heart could utter,"—and Lingard would interrupt with his little eyes fixed on nothing—"Yes, Allie, one-night stands all

next season, for me. I can get more money out of them."

The following summer, Mr. Whiffen and I were together again, in Offenbach's "The Grand Duchess," playing a short season in New York. After that, we joined forces with an out-of-town manager, John Templeton, called "Honest John" by members of the profession, as he was one of the few managers who could be relied upon to pay his actors. He will be of interest to the present generation because he was the father of Fay Templeton, who was so popular with Weber and Fields, and whose last appearance was made just a few years ago in the revival of "Pinafore," playing my old rôle of Buttercup. May the Fay, as they called her at the time we joined her father's company, was singing songs between pieces, a pretty and clever child, seven or eight years old. She designed her own costumes for her mother to make, and would volunteer to play anything when the company was in difficulties. Her mother was known on the stage as Alice Vane. I was still using my maiden name, Blanche Galton.

FAY TEMPLETON, *May the Fay,* WHEN SHE WAS THE INFANT PRODIGY OF HER FATHER'S COMPANY

The first part of the tour was not a success and Mr. Templeton found himself in debt. He talked the situation over with Mr. Whiffen and my husband suggested that the company should get into some new territory and spoke of Key West, Florida. It was finally agreed upon that we should go there. We stopped at a place called Cedar Keys, where we boarded a coast steamer. While waiting for the boat, we gave a performance in the hotel dining-room on tables tied together with rope to make a raised platform. Our audience was made up of the passengers who had come in to Cedar Keys on various buses.

Tom's expectations regarding Key West were well founded, for the inhabitants of that out-of-the-way place were hungry for entertainment, and there were also ships in the harbor filled with sailors who patronized us freely. However, the population was not large, so in order to keep the performances new and interesting, we had to give twelve productions a week. A list of one week's plays will show you how hard we worked: "Camille," "Luck in a Name," "Lady and Devil,"

"Naval Engagements," "Lucille," "Day after the Wedding," "Chimney Corner," "Blind Beggar," "Drunkard," "Country Cousins," "Temptation," and "Poppleton's Predicaments."

One critic speaking of Miss Vane, the leading lady, and the wonderful parts she had played, Juliet, among them, only hoped she would soon do "East Lynne," "surpassing herself." When she finally played Lady Isabel she was stormed with tiny bouquets from the dress circle, and the critics said, "Alice Vane is the equal of any actress in the land in the part of Lady Isabel." The grand old play of "East Lynne" was considered a fine play in those days, and yet only two years ago in New York, it was done as a burlesque.

Honest John soon paid us all our back salary, and I recall that it came to us tied up in handkerchiefs and all in silver dollars.

One morning while we were still in Key West, four men of our company, including John Templeton, went out to fish in a sailing boat on the gulf, and were lost for a week. A squall came up and took them clear over to

Havana where they were not permitted to land because of a revolution that was going on at that time. Finally, they were picked up, after we had given them up for dead and were about to leave Key West. Fortunately for me, Tom did not go with them. The lost actors returned more dead than alive, burned horribly by the fierce tropic sun and almost starved. Poor Honest John Templeton was not able to play for weeks.

Leaving Key West, we were voted the most popular players who ever played that city. In one of the papers, this appeared:

> There is an opera in our land,
> Which beats Blake's Minstrels all to sand,—
> And if you wish to see things funny,
> Just bring old Templeton your money.
>
> May the Fay will do her best,
> And that applies to all the rest.
> Miss Blanche and Whiffen seem too funny
> When they draw a ticket for a lot of money.

The above is the composition of a young lad who had hitherto been entirely unsuspected of poetical abilities. It came into our possession by accident, unknown to the young author; and while not equal to Byron, Pope or Shel-

ley, yet it takes a high place among Key West productions.

In another Southern town we played later, this appeared in a small local paper:

> The nightly entertainment afforded the people by Templeton and Co., has infused new life into our city; and as one of the noticeable results, we may mention the outcroppings of a disposition among our youth to memorize song ballads and to mimic the elocution of the stage. In fact, our "devil" is at the head of a Boy's Thespian Club, and his troupe of aspiring urchins give daily entertainments to such children as can pay five cents at the door. The little rogues are dressed in splendid outfits of red calico, their sister's stockings and things, and to see them acting before a full house (no dead heads) would make the church socials tremble for their laurels. Whiffen and Blanche Galton are histrionic gods at whose shrine the boys in calico do homage.

But the engagement, what with its one-night-stands, bad hotels, hard travel and poor food, had proved so strenuous, that when it was over and Tom and I had returned to Philadelphia, my doctor told me I was in no condition to accept another engagement until I had had a complete rest. We had saved a little money, so after talking it all over, Tom and I decided to return to England for the summer.

CHAPTER VIII—

Our First Trip to the Far West

IN ENGLAND WE FOUND THINGS much the same and rather slow in comparison with the excitement of the New World. However, I was glad to see my famous aunts again and numerous other relatives and friends. Aunt Louisa and Aunt Susan were still teaching music, successfully. We spent most of our time with Mother and Grandfather Pyne, really a remarkable old man with all his faculties clear and sound as a bell. It was he who had gone to America with Aunt Louisa in 1854, and when he returned home had written some very amusing accounts of the journey and his impressions.

I remember, too, the pride with which my youngest brother took me about and introduced me as his sister, Mrs. Whiffen, from America, quite a distinction, I can tell you, and everybody thought I must be very rich.

They also asked me about my encounters with Indians and how much gold I had picked up off the streets.

However, England did not seem to be our real home any more, and as we had made a contract to appear with Horace Lingard in America, we turned our thoughts toward the States. I continued to be a very poor sailor and suffered again on the return trip.

Rejoining the Lingards in the fall of '73, Tom and I were engaged to play in "The New Magdalene," a dramatization of Wilkie Collins' book. Lingard had just cut pages of dialogue from Collins' novel and had fashioned a play out of it, paying no royalty. Mrs. Lingard, now a full-fledged actress, played the title rôle most satisfactorily. I was doing a very good character part and so was Tom. Lingard used to do his popular sketches at the end of the long play.

We had troubles with the censor then as well as now, and it might be amusing to quote what one critic said about "The New Magdalene" when Lingard first produced it in New York.

Many unfamiliar with the story and the dramatization might shrink with holy horror from the very title of the play (imagine that title compared with titles of today, "The Demi-Virgin," "Sex," "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath," etc.)—fearful lest the material of which it is compounded might not prove of the nicest. Happily all such virtuous fears are entirely unnecessary. It is devoutly to be wished that there were more plays like "New Magdalene" to elevate and refine the drama of the day, and bring the stage back to the rectitude and beauty from which it has been perverted by the horde of prurient French sensations which have disgraced us.

After New York, we went on the road with the Lingards and I recall one amusing incident that occurred on that trip which brings to light the characters of the Lingards much better than I could ever hope to describe them.

On the train, one afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Lingard fell into a discussion as to which was the greatest drawing-card as far as the general public was concerned. It worked up into a very heated argument as we drew near to Harrisburg, Pa., where we were to play that night, and I overheard Lingard say, "Well, we'll soon see, my darling I won't get off here because my throat's bad and I need a night's

rest. Now, you play Harrisburg *alone,* and I'll join you in the next town."

In spite of protests, he did go on and we stopped at Harrisburg. The house was packed and just before the play began, an announcement was made to the effect that Mr. Lingard would be unable to play but Mrs. Lingard would finish the program with a one-act sketch instead of Lingard's famous songs. Any one who was dissatisfied would have their money returned. It was amusing to see the people walking out all through the first act, and to watch Mrs. Lingard's expression although she was a clever actress and hid her real feelings. Only about a third of the audience was left to see the play through.

So when Lingard met us later, he said, "Well, my dear Allie who was the attraction?"

And Mrs. Lingard, smiling, answered him in that rich, dramatic voice, "Well, my dear Willie, you lost a lot of money doing that. Was it worth it?"

He returned her smile and replied, "Yes

A Young Man Named David Belasco

my darling, for it has settled the question, once and for all."

And yet I doubt very much whether it really did.

We were a struggling, impecunious lot in those days, as I look back on us now. It took all our wits to make ends meet, and yet Tom was always loaning money to other actors, even when we hardly knew where our next meal was coming from. Needless to say, he rarely had money returned. He never thought of that part of it and would always say, "He gives *twice* who gives quickly."

I remember an incident regarding a young English actor of our company who was in great need of fifty dollars. I had bought a sealskin coat while I was in England, and it was suggested by Mr. Whiffen that we should pawn it and let our poor friend have the fifty dollars. I would not need the coat until winter, anyhow. So we did, and although we had many encouraging letters from him, he never found himself in a position to repay us. Here is a sample of one of his letters, worthy, I think, of Micawber.

MY DEAR WHIFFEN:

Don't lose faith in me. I am wildly at work with hand and brain, keeping my obligation to you constantly in sight. Be a wee bit patient with me and believe me in honest purpose and great haste, your more than obliged and considerably over-worked friend.

In the spring of '74, Mr. Lingard produced a new play called by the moviesque title of "Led Astray." He offered Tom and me two very bad parts, hoping we would not take them as he could have secured cheaper actors, but we needed the money and remained with him until the end of his season according to our contract.

During that time we attended the opening of the new Fifth Avenue theatre. Little old New York was growing up, and the theatres were becoming more and more pretentious. We were all very much impressed by this latest one,—a very handsome theatre with frescoes by Garibaldi, an aerial dome above the auditorium, and twelve proscenium boxes and two galleries. At its dedication I heard Miss Fanny Morant speak the first half of an original address, in verse, written for the occasion

by Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. I quote a few lines from one of the newspapers:

> There were twenty-eight persons upon the stage, conspicuous among them may be named the stately and courtly Charles Fisher, and the quaint and thoughtful William Davidge. Of the roses and lilies of feminine loveliness it is needless to say that there was a perfect garden.

From the old program of that event, I take the following fashion notes, feeling they may give a picture of that time and bring up before my readers an idea of how those "roses and lilies of feminine loveliness" were attired.

> Silk stockings are in vogue with the new and peculiar shoe.
>
> Promenade skirts are to clear the ground by about an inch.
>
> The back hair is worn in a single braid called the "queue."
>
> Some of the new bonnets are very small and are worn far back in the vicinity of the false hair.
>
> For all full-dress occasions low corsage, short sleeves, and long double-fold court train will be the rule.

In the spring of '74, we joined Honest John Templeton again and took the long journey to Virginia City, Nevada. This was at that time one of the most glamorous and exciting places on earth. We came there just between

the great fires of '71 and '75, when Virginia City was at the height of its prosperity and nearing the height of its fame. It was the recognized metropolis of the world for the mining of precious metals and the effects of its great discoveries were felt everywhere but, of course, nowhere as in the town itself. Life there for a time had a singular interest and charm that we could feel as soon as we arrived. There was a suppressed excitement and expectancy felt everywhere and shared by the entire community. Vast wealth was being uncovered, and nobody knew to whom it was going,—whether it would be allotted to the fortunate ones through their good luck or through their own good judgment. Everyone had shares of stock in the mines and was trying to increase it through the stock markets,—everyone except us,—the poor, wandering actors.

I shall always remember the appearance of the place. It had the outward aspect of a great village perched upon the side of a high mountain. There were many hoisting works belonging to the different mines and great piles of waste rock dumped near them. The streets

were knee high in dust and the houses were all shaky wooden structures. The sun beat down unmercifully. Our theatre was a hall with a tin roof. Gambling was still a licensed occupation, but it was carried on behind closed doors. The number of saloons was out of proportion to the population.

When we were there, the Ophir and Consolidated Virginia mines were consolidated, and excitement was at a feverish pitch. The fluctuating population of the mining town was at its height. It was said that there were 25,000 people in Virginia City. They jostled each other in the dirty streets, men mostly, of all nationalities. In the evenings they flocked to our performances and threw money on the stage.

Tom and I were taken down into one of the great gold mines, dressed like the miners. Upon coming up, we were asked if we had any money, and when we truthfully replied that we had not, a gentleman said, "Then go sell the shirt off your back and buy Ophir."

We were shown the place where "Sam" Clemens,—Mark Twain,—was supposed to

have lived when he was a reporter on "The Territorial Enterprise." He was well liked in Virginia City but had done nothing there to distinguish himself. Later, of course, he wrote "Roughing It" which told of his experiences in that astonishing mining town.

We attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a small wooden edifice on the hillside, presided over by Bishop Whitaker, the missionary bishop of Nevada. He was certainly a worthy successor of the apostles.

We visited and played in Silver City, Dutch Flat, Truckee, Carson City and many smaller towns now vanished and forgotten. All of them were exciting places, always on the verge of fame and fortune. In some places we gave our shows under canvas, the stage lit by kerosene flares. Our songs were very popular and we could hear them being whistled in the streets by bearded prospectors in red shirts.

While we were in Carson City, Templeton's mother died, and he went East to attend her funeral, but he sent us back enough money to continue on our way to California. We headed at once for San Francisco, always a

good theatrical city with keen appreciation for the better things of the stage. I was glad to go there, for I was anxious to see my dear sister Susan, again, she and her husband having settled down in San Francisco.

San Francisco was picturesque with small buildings and the white sand dunes creeping quite far down town. Chinatown and the Barbary Coast region were then in full swing. I experienced two slight earthquake shocks the second day after my arrival. The people did not seem to mind them.

We played at Maguire's theatre, and the other big house then was the old California where I knew the Patemans and Harry Edwards and other favorites of that day. Then the Templetons went on and we joined Mr. Herne, the well-known actor, father of Crystal and Julie Herne, so well known by the present theatre-goers. He was then between thirty and forty and had not yet attained the great success that was waiting for him in later life. He played such successes as "Rip Van Winkle" and "Charles O'Malley," and I became his leading woman and Mr. Whiffen his

chief comedian. He was an inspiring man to work with and we both learned a lot from his direction. He had formerly played with Lucille Western, a very famous and intelligent actress who had created many big parts, and it was my good fortune to step into her shoes, so to speak. I'm afraid I did not fit them very well, but Mr. Herne taught me all the older actresses' business, especially when I did Nancy in "Oliver Twist," and fine, effective business it was. She seemed to be the mistress of sensational stage-falls. When she played "Oliver Twist" with E. I. Davenport and J. W. Wallack, their rendition of that play stands in theatrical history as one of the most dramatically horrifying performances ever seen on any stage. It was said that the murder scene sent ladies in the audience into fainting fits and drove strong men from the theatre, unable to endure any longer the effect of their terrible natural acting.

Following our engagement in San Francisco with Mr. Herne, we took the trip to Portland, Oregon, by boat, since there were no railroads up through northern California. I shall never

"In the Evenings They Flocked to Our Performances and Threw Money on the Stage"

forget that trip for it was one of the most trying sea voyages I had ever experienced. That coast is very rough and dangerous, dotted with many lighthouses, warning ships away from treacherous rocks and promontories. It took us five days and a half to make the trip, which is made in two days now.

Portland was a very small city surrounded by water and hills, with an end-of-the-world feeling about it, but Mr. Herne was successful there, and we played a repertoire of many plays: "Rip Van Winkle," "Dombey and Son," "Lighthouse Cliffs,"—a new play adapted by Mr. Herne and a young man named David Belasco, who was just beginning to come to the fore in San Francisco,—"Oliver Twist," "Charles O'Malley," "The Octoroon," "Rag Picker of Paris," and "The School of Reform." Certainly a young actor received thorough training in those days. There was no long term of playing one rôle for us, which is such a menace to the young actor now.

After our engagement with Herne was over, some members of the company wanted us to return to San Francisco by wagon, playing the

small towns as we went along, but we had already signed a contract to play with Gilder's concerts, a Portland organization. That was an unusual experience and lots of fun for we went about the wooded, lumbering country to tiny, unheard-of towns, sometimes with our piano on a dray, as most places could not boast of a musical instrument larger than a mouth organ. Everything was most primitive. At Eugene, Oregon, I remember meeting a proprietor of the only hotel, who was worth five thousand dollars and yet his wife was made to do all the chamber work. Most places could not appreciate all the finer music, so we sang such songs of the day as, "The Grand Waltz," "Love Came to Mary," "I Cannot Mind My Wheel," and "Over the Hawthorn Hedge," to off-set the classics. Mr. Whiffen was very popular with his violin selections. Victoria appreciated us and we had a long stay in that most beautiful spot.

Back in San Francisco again, I sang for awhile in Dr. Stone's church and Tom played at some recitals. Just before we were to return East, we had a frightful scare, for that was

the time when Ralston, the president of the California bank, committed suicide. He was found dead on the beach with a bullet through his brain. The money with which we intended to buy our tickets to New York was in the California bank. It was only two hundred and fifty dollars, but that was a considerable sum for us. As soon as Ralston was found dead, the bank was closed and everyone was of the opinion that it had failed. Tom and I were in a panic for we saw no way of getting back East and there was little work for us in the western city at this time of the year. However, after spending some sleepless nights, the bank opened its doors again, and paid us back our money in twenty-dollar gold pieces.

Always seeming to step in at the right moment, our old faithful Lingard came along then, having just finished playing in Australia. He offered me a position with him which would bring me as far east as Chicago, and since Mr. Whiffen had a proposition awaiting for him in that city, I accepted. We left the train at Sacramento and Tom continued on his way.

CHAPTER IX—

"The Two Orphans" and "Pinafore"

BY THE FALL OF '75 I WAS BACK in Chicago after my tour with Lingard. On the way back we had stopped at Salt Lake and I had met Brigham Young, and he autographed a photograph of himself for me. He seemed a pompous, impressive man with a great white beard, and as he signed his picture for me, I reminded him of the time my mother had played for him some years before with Lingard. He remembered it perfectly and praised her playing. In spite of his pompous bearing and his virile, full beard, his hands were shaky and his face was the face of a sick man. He died not long after that.

Mr. Whiffen was playing in and about Chicago with a company which had Louis James for a leading man. Tom was away when I arrived in town, so I joined a company of "The Two Orphans," which was then a sen-

sation since its great success with Kate Claxton, in New York. This was the first Chicago production and drew big crowds. Besides playing a small part in that, I did some solo work in St. Paul's church to eke out a living. Both Tom and I were receiving very small salaries.

In January I had a letter from Mr. Whiffen asking me to join his company. I did so and there played two parts in their production of "The Two Orphans," one of them being the Countess. We played one-night stands in Iowa and Illinois, performing such plays as, "Led Astray," "Saratoga," "Frou-Frou." At Bloomington, Illinois, our manager disappeared and none of us received a penny for all our weeks of hard work. That was the lot of the actor in those days, a thing which is scarcely possible now with the splendid services of the Equity Association.

In the fall of '76 my son was born, just after Mr. Whiffen had made a success in a play called, "Tom Cobb," written by Gilbert just before he began his famous collaboration with Sullivan. My son is with me now as I sit on the honeysuckle-covered porch with my mem-

ories, and I turn to him often to ask him if he remembers this or that. Sometimes I forget and ask him about things that happened before he was born, for at my age, the past becomes dim at times.

I named our boy Tom, after his father. When he became a man he went on the stage too, but he never cared for it and at last became a farmer 'way up here in the lovely Blue Ridge.

Later that same season, Mr. Whiffen was one of the cast with Lotta in her celebrated success, "Musette." I had seen the great favorite of the mining camps some years before in her characterization of Cigarette in Ouida's "Under Two Flags," and now I saw her again. She was a bright, champagney little romp, who sang, danced and said smart things. There was only one Lotta and fun was her destiny. She looked as pretty as ever that night, and her limbs, which she was fond of showing, but in a coy way, entirely devoid of vulgarity, were shapely. I see her now, a rollicking, roystering girl in short dresses and gaily colored hose, dancing like an elf about the stage.

Showing how people's ideas were changing, the next morning the critics called "Musette," a play that was "a good example of the American drama of ten years ago." But the gallery loved Lotta, and that was the secret of her success. And the gallery counted so much then. The gallery gods were kings. They were never afraid to express themselves aloud and in no uncertain tones. They knew their Shakespeare and if an actor stumbled in his lines they were always ready to correct him.

I remember once when one of the well-known character actresses came on the stage intoxicated, the gallery became aware of it, and one of the gods stood up on his seat and shouted at her, "You're drunk, Mrs. ———"

There was a breathless silence, and then the actress came wrathfully down to the foot-lights, hands on hips, and glaring up at the offender said, pugnaciously: "Sure, an' I'm not!"

"Sure, an' you are!" cried back the gallery god.

"Sure, an' I'm not!" insisted the actress, and so back and forth they argued the question

until the house was in roars of laughter and the curtain had to be rung down.

The gallery was not the only offender. Sometimes the dress circle spoke up or hooted or hissed. An instance of that was when Boucicault adapted the play "Led Astray" from a drama by the French playwright, Octave Feuillet. Boucicault did not acknowledge the play as an adaptation, either on the program or in the press, and when there was a call for the author after the first act, he came before the curtain to take a bow. In a box was a Frenchman who had recognized the source of the play, and as Boucicault bowed, he called in a low voice, "Octave Feuillet! Octave Feuillet!

Boucicault did not flinch, and after bowing again, he left the stage. But when he was called out again after the third act, he thanked the audience on behalf of himself *and* his collaborator, Octave Feuillet!

At this time, the terrible fire of the Brooklyn theatre occurred, during a performance of "The Two Orphans," with Kate Claxton. Two of the actors were burned to death and many

of the audience. It was a strange coincidence, but ever after that when Kate Claxton appeared, fires broke out in the theatre, until people became superstitious and stayed away from her performances.

Another event of that year was the opening of the Albian club for actors. It was really the forerunner of the present-day Lambs' Club. An opening entertainment was given in which John Drew and his brother-in-law, Maurice Barrymore, took part.

In '77, a youthful actress of stately and classic beauty took New York by storm. It was Mary Anderson. Mr. Whiffen played with her in her production of "Romeo and Juliet." I did not play as my young son took up all of my time, but I saw her lovely Juliet, and later met her. She was young and inexperienced but showed much talent and promise. Her voice was powerful, and she was better in deep tragic scenes and not as good in her lighter moments which demanded more technique. One strange thing about her was that she always had bad taste in clothes.

She had one little habit which is not gen-

erally known but which used to amuse her company very much. The beautiful girl used to chew gum up to the time she walked on the stage, to soothe her throat, she said, and often the stately Juliet or the glorious Rosalind could be seen hastily sticking gum on the side of a tree in Arden or a hall in Verona, before gliding on the boards to amaze her audience with her matchless face and magnetic voice.

Later, Miss Anderson went abroad to study, and then at the height of her career amazed every one by retiring from the stage.

After Mary Anderson, Modjeska, the great Polish tragedienne, came to the Fifth Avenue theatre. Her first appearance in the States had been in San Francisco where she was hailed as a very remarkable actress. She opened in New York in "Adrienne Lecouvreur." I was there at that brilliant first night. Mr. Lester Wallack occupied a box and Miss Clara Morris led the applause. Modjeska was of a light, lithe build and did not impress us as having much strength, and her action was rarely vigorous. Her voice was not loud but

MODJESKA AT THE HEIGHT OF HER CAREER

rich and full, and every utterance could be plainly heard. She contrasted greatly with Mary Anderson, who was loud and overacted.

When she finished "Adrienne Lecouvreur," she showed us her famous "Camille," which set a new note in the portrayal of Dumas' unfortunate heroine. She invested the character with great charm and womanly qualities, and was never coarse. Mr. Whiffen played with her in "Camille," but I still was away from the stage. I was introduced to Modjeska and found her a gracious and fine woman, an artist to her fingertips.

In '78 I was on the road again with Lingard, but the tour was cut short in Houston, Texas, and I came hurrying back to find Mr. Whiffen rehearsing in a new opera called "Pinafore," written by Tom's old friend Sullivan and his partner, Gilbert. I had heard something about its success when it was done in England at the Savoy theatre. The play in America was to be launched at the Standard theatre by a man named Duff. Duff was not paying a royalty to the authors because there

was no international copyright law and an English play done in America could be produced by anyone.

It was just a matter of luck that I happened to create the part of Buttercup, for I was called in at the last moment because of the sudden illness of the actress assigned to the rôle. I rehearsed Monday and Tuesday and played Wednesday night. I'll never forget that opening. I did not think the play was a hit, at first, but after Mr. Whiffen came off as Sir Joseph Porter, we knew from the applause and the shouting that all was well. Mr. Whiffen's performance received great praise from the press and the public, and dear Tom could feel that he was at last coming into his own. It made me very happy for I knew with his ability he needed only a little chance like this to bring him into the front rank of character comedians.

"Pinafore" ran for a hundred and fifty nights, a very long run for those days, and during that time we counted six companies playing the opera in New York City at the same time, all pirated companies, the same

as ours. When the English company finally came over from England, the rivalry became hot and much interest was evinced to see wherein the original production differed from the various companies playing in and about New York, especially ours.

Mr. Gilbert himself undertook the stage-management and attacked his duties with such zeal that he dressed as a man-of-war's man and mingled with the chorus on the stage. The audience, to whom he was a stranger, did not know him. Mr. Sullivan conducted. The opening night they had a large house and a very enthusiastic one. Indeed, it was right that they should have been greeted so warmly for, after all, they were really the only company that had the right to play "Pinafore." The English company proved to have better singers than we had, but the actor who played Sir Joseph Porter suffered by comparison with my husband. All the other Sir Josephs burlesqued the part, but Tom played it sincerely, quietly and unctuously. It is interesting to note that there was some talk of having Richard Mansfield play Sir Joseph Porter, but he had

a disagreement with Mr. Duff and my husband was given the part.

Things were looking up for us now. We took a little apartment in New York and settled down comfortably for the long run of "Pinafore." The hardships of one-night-stands, of bad hotels, of cold and hunger seemed to lie behind us. The future glowed pleasantly ahead. I was so happy with the two Toms, little Tom and big Tom. Every morning, big Tom and I had our music. It was one of the great bonds that held us together. We both loved music, passionately, but I think Tom felt its spell even more deeply than I did. He often said he wouldn't want to live if there weren't music in the world.

Immediately after breakfast, we would play duets together,—Tom with his violin, and I accompanying him on the piano. Tom had many eccentricities. He would often play attired only in his nightshirt, tucking a handkerchief in the collar as a rest for his violin, and play away, totally unconscious of his ludicrous appearance. He was also quite absent-minded, and one morning, attired only in

pajamas and a dressing gown, and smoking his pipe, he went out on Broadway and crossed the street to buy some meat at the butcher's. I suddenly realized what he was doing and stuck my head out of the window of our apartment and frantically called to him, but he did not hear me. He continued blissfully on his way; made his purchase and returned home calmly smoking, oblivious to the stares of the astonished pedestrians.

Many celebrities of music dropped into our little apartment to visit with us, among them, Remenji and Vogrich. Remenji was a great wit and a practical joker. He would never ring the bell, but sticking his head in the street door, he would yell up four flights, "Oh, Whiffen! Whiffen! Are you there, Whiffen?" until one of us would answer him. He would do this late at night and wake up the whole house. Vogrich spoke broken English and would convulse us with his expressions. One of them was, "went away with tail among his legs." Vogrich wrote a new overture for "Pinafore" which is still used, I believe.

Pierre Josephs, the famous maker of vio-

lins, was a good friend of Tom's. Tom preferred the violin Josephs made for him to all the other instruments he had, and he owned a Stradivarius and an Amati. Tom carried his precious Josephs everywhere he went and loved it as a child. He was always quarreling with some porter or other because they did not handle the violin carefully enough.

After our long run in New York we took "Pinafore" to Chicago where its success was duplicated.

In '79, Steele Mackaye, actor, playwright and first exponent of Delsarte in America, became the manager of the new Madison Square theatre. Tom and I were engaged by him to play in a new drama of his, first entitled "The Iron Will" and later changed to "Hazel Kirke." The new theatre was not ready when we began rehearsals, so we opened on the road. The play was well enough received, but not to any astonishing degree, but Mackaye was determined it should be the opening bill at the Madison Square.

The theatre was the most modern and handsome yet built in New York. One great fea-

Mrs. Thomas Whiffen as Buttercup in the First American Production of "Pinafore"

ture was the movable double stage that was considered such a time-saver when changing scenery. It worked like an elevator, one stage being pulled up into the flies while the other rose from beneath to take its place. Mr. James Steele Mackaye was the inventor of this clever device. In the April, 1928, number of my Memoirs printed in the Woman's Home Companion, an error was made crediting Nelson Waldron with this invention.

The opening was a brilliant affair. I remember that the drop-curtain had been made by Tiffany. It was a very elaborate and beautiful piece of embroidery, representing a confused scene of trees and flowers. "Hazel Kirke" was not a success at first. It was called a combination of many old dramas. Some of the critics said it was a good, old-fashioned melodrama that would have suited our grandfathers but it had little chance for popularity nowadays.

The critics were wrong, for in about four or five weeks the business picked up and the play was a great success. I played Mercy Kirke, the gentle old mother of the heroine,

and Mr. Whiffen played the comedy part, a rather silly rôle, but he played it so well that it became one of the hits of the play. Tom was the sort of actor, rare to be sure, who could bring a touch of magic to any part, good or bad.

"Hazel Kirke" ran four hundred and eighty-six nights in New York alone, a longer run than "Pinafore." Tom and I were glad for it kept us together with our boy, in the little apartment that we had come to call home. Many famous people appeared in the play during its run,—De Wolfe Hopper, Jefferys Lewis, Georgia Cayvan, Effie Ellsler and many others.

I recall one amusing incident that happened when Steele Mackaye was playing the miller. In the last act, when the old man is blind, Mackaye indulged in some very realistic acting and began to tremble as if struck with a severe case of ague. He trembled so violently that the wobbly, freak stage began to tremble with him. That affected the dishes in the cupboard and they commenced to shiver and shake, and then all the actors seated on the

stage began to teeter too. It struck us as being so funny that we started laughing and almost spoiled the big scene of the play. Mr. Mackaye was furious, but when we pointed out to him that his fit of ague was so realistic that it almost brought down the house, he had to laugh with us.

While we were playing "Hazel Kirke," Edwin Booth made his appearance at the Madison Square, prior to sailing to Europe, at a matinée for the benefit of the fund to erect a statue to Edgar Allan Poe in Central Park. Tom volunteered to play and acted Gremio in Booth's production of "The Taming of the Shrew." I attended the performance and found that Booth played comedy almost as well as tragedy. Effie Ellsler, our Hazel, acted Katharina. A rare treat on the same excellent program was to see Clara Morris do the sleep-walking scene from "Macbeth."

During the run of Mackaye's play, one evening, before the doors had opened for the performance, the gas man, while lighting up, brought his torch in contact with the curtain, and it was quickly destroyed. The steam ven-

tilating apparatus of the theatre quickly dispelled the smoke; the doors were thrown open; the public admitted; and about twenty minutes later than the usual time, the performance commenced. A drop-curtain was used instead.

Mr. Whiffen and I were engaged as permanent members of the Madison Square stock company, and it was then I began to specialize in old woman's parts. I remember Tom's amusing frankness when we talked it over. "Yes, Blanche," he said, solemnly, "you're not getting any younger and you were never pretty. Yes, I guess you'd better play old ladies."

And just think of it, I was only thirty-five then! Well, I agreed because I believed he was right, and that's how it began. I suppose I should be used to being an old lady by now! At this time, I also took my married name and have been known ever since as Mrs. Thomas Whiffen. Few people living today can remember the name of Blanche Galton.

The Madison Square was a success from the first and housed many productions that now

stand as theatrical history. Most all the big names of the American theatre were connected in some way or another with this house. Tom and I were in success after success. Seldom were we in a real failure. In September, 1881, we did a play called, "Esmeralda," written by Mrs. Burnett. Beautiful and whimsical Annie Russell was in that, one of her first successes. I played the old mother. At first they did not want me to do the part because it was that of a shrew and a "cat." It was their idea to "type" me in sweet parts like Mercy in "Hazel Kirke," but I protested. I wanted the experience of playing all sorts of parts, for I had seen too many actors limited in this way.

When we took "Esmeralda" to San Francisco, Belasco was the stage manager of the old Baldwin theatre and he received high praise for the realistic manner in which he set the play.

After that came "The Young Mrs. Winthrop," by Bronson Howard. Bronson Howard was a charming gentleman and was all that I think a playwright should be. At re-

hearsals he objected to the way Miss Agnes Booth was interpreting one of the parts, but when he saw her on the opening night, he came back stage to tell the actress that he liked the way she was playing the part much better than the way he had conceived it. So many playwrights I have met have been so stubborn and cannot see that quite often a character cannot be played upon the stage the way it is written in the script. Of course, quite often the actor is to blame because he cannot understand what the author really means.

Young Henry Miller joined us in "Young Mrs. Winthrop," to play the juvenile lead. He was very much in love at the time with the lady who later became his wife, and we used to tease the handsome boy about it. It was amusing to see him blush and become confused like a school lad.

Again we took our successful play on tour as far as San Francisco. We put up at the Baldwin Hotel, but hotel fires were so numerous that Mr. Whiffen would not stay in that large wooden fire-trap. He became so nervous the first night that he got up and walked the

THOMAS WHIFFEN AS SIR JOSEPH PORTER IN THE FIRST AMERICAN PRODUCTION OF "PINAFORE"

room and the lobby until morning, and then hustled me out of there to an apartment on Bush street. Strange to say, the hotel and Baldwin theatre were burned not long afterwards.

San Francisco in the early eighties was a fascinating city. It was the little Paris of America. Its color, its sophistication and its wonderful cooking made it world-famous. Tom and I used to eat at the old Poodle Dog, a quaint place with a sanded floor. What tasty sea foods and what delicious soups and steaks and chicken, and all so reasonable! Alas, those days are gone now, and the old Poodle Dog is one of those cherished memories that went up in flame and smoke in 1906.

Our next play was called "Alpine Roses," in which Richard Mansfield was featured. He had just made a success as the old Baron Chevrial in "A Parisian Romance," and all New York was talking about the wonderful new character actor. Tom and I knew Mme. Rudensdorff, Richard Mansfield's mother, very well, and just before this we had received a letter from her asking us to do something for her son, who was then trying to get a foot-

hold in the American theatre. Mansfield was quite capable of helping himself, and even as she wrote he had made his mark.

"Alpine Roses" was not a big success and Mansfield was severely criticized by the press. They said he converted the Prussian Count into a Fifth Avenue dude. One critic said: "Mr. Mansfield has hitherto posed as an actor of very great merit. His failure as the Prussian Count proves how good an actor may be in characters that fit his idiosyncrasies, and how bad he may be in parts known as straight business." Mansfield should never have played the part as it gave him few big opportunities. He was essentially a sensational actor, relying on startling effects to put him over. My husband played opposite him and I played an old German woman who kept an inn in the Alps.

In '84, Belasco's own play, "May Blossom" was done and made a big success, principally because of Belasco's stage effects. I played Aunt Deb, and in the first act I was supposed to hang out clothes on a line in the backyard. Belasco caused comment by having the wind blow the clothes, very naturally. A draught

was created in the wings by men who waved huge fans back and forth. Belasco revelled in little details like that, and they have helped to win him a high place in our theatre. I believe the scene that really counted in "May Blossom," was the one where the children had a funeral for a dead bird. It was so natural and moving that many tears were shed nightly, and people asked each other, everywhere, if they had seen the little children burying the dead bird.

I remember how the critics doubted Mr. Belasco's authorship of the play and his sincerity when he fainted before the curtain in response to the calls for, "Author! Author!"

People bewail the lack of good critics today, but way back in 1882, I find this comment in an old magazine of the theatre, showing that things were no different then.

> The age we live in is not critical, and the reason is that it is not well read. Our young men and young women never read books, and even our critics are not only ignorant, but proud of their ignorance.

CHAPTER X—"The Mikado"

WHEN A. M. PALMER CAME INTO the Madison Square, it was all changed and a great many of the original company were scattered. One of the first things that I remember in connection with Mr. Palmer was the afternoon performance of "Elaine," given for members of the profession at the Madison Square. How that glamorous afternoon comes back to me, bit by bit, like some glorious, broken-up rainbow.

Mr. Palmer received his guests as they entered the house, and wore a frock coat closely buttoned with a rose in the button-hole, light trousers and a very shiny and tall silk hat. He had sent a box to Ellen Terry and Henry Irving, then playing in New York, but they did not come. The guests were a fair representation of all the noted figures in the theatre

of that time. Mr. Whiffen and I sat well down front and I held my little Tom on my knees. He fell in love with Annie Russell, who was playing Elaine. Rose Coghlan and her husband were there, then playing in "Forget-me-not," and tears sprang to her eyes when the lily maid faded away.

Just in front of us were William H. Crane and his wife. Mr. Crane was then at the height of his fame in "The Henrietta." Then way down in front were Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Barrymore and Miss Beatrice Cameron, wife of Richard Mansfield. Mansfield himself was there, very much interested in the play.

Gossip flew between acts about the various players. It was whispered and came to us that the Sir Launcelot, Mr. Alexander Salvini, was nursing a bruised ear which he got in a friendly bout with Austin the day after the Kilrain-Smith fight, when moved by enthusiasm he put on the gloves to celebrate Kilrain's good luck.

The house was slow in emptying. The guests lingered in the doorways, praising the excellence of the play and the players, and old

friends greeted each other. I can hear them still and see most of those well known faces. Who would think them well known now?

John Wild, of Harrigan's, was in the midst of a group of painters. F. S. Church, the artist and celebrated idealist, sent his regrets, but afterwards appeared, and said, "It is not often one can see ideals alive." Mr. John F. Weir, the flower and landscape painter, chatted with Mr. Whiffen and me, and pronounced the poetic atmosphere of the play a marvellous effect. Then there was J. Carroll Beckwith, who instructed the life classes in the art school of the Cooper Institute; also William Rice, the portrait painter, who raved over the appearance of Annie Russell and wanted to paint her at once in the mediaeval costume, and also there was Addison Richards, the secretary of the National Academy, who painted and wrote so well.

The first play done that year was "The Private Secretary," by William Gillette, which had been a big success in England, and was also a big success with us. The comedy was considered very daring because the leading

"Tom and I Dined with Sullivan at Old Delmonico's"

rôle was that of a preacher played in a low-comedy vein. Tom and I had very good character parts in it, and Henry Miller was with us again. That was the real beginning of our long friendship which only ended with Mr. Miller's death a few years ago.

In 1885 I had the great pleasure of playing with the noted American actress, Clara Morris, who returned to Mr. Daly's management for the second time since she had ceased to be a member of his regular company. She created the part of Denise in the drama of that name by Alexander Dumas. I played the part of Madame Brissot.

The play as a play was a model of the unities and the action occurred on one spot in one day. The dialogue was true and the story was touching. With all this and the fame of the star to recommend it, it did not make the success anticipated by the actress and the manager. Had it been played by Miss Morris ten years before, it might have made a wonderful impression. It was not the part for a mature actress. The criticisms were generally favorable, one or two most appreciative, but there

were exceptions in which the critics cruelly dwelt upon the physical unfitness of the star.

Miss Morris was very brave, for at this time she was suffering from an accident to her foot and ankle which she had sustained in Boston, and which almost crippled her, and also from an attack of neuralgia, all of which she pluckily disregarded to keep her engagement with the public. I recall seeing her grimace with pain just before making her first appearance, and then go sweeping on with a most beautiful smile.

While I was still playing with Miss Morris, Mr. Whiffen was approached about playing a part in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Mikado," which had not yet been produced in the States. Remembering his success with "Pinafore," my husband was anxious to play in another Gilbert and Sullivan opera, so he accepted the part of Pooh-Bah.

Just before the opera opened, Sullivan came over from England. He was a very famous personage then and was wearing his title, *Sir* Arthur Sullivan. He looked up my husband and said, "Whiffen, you're not going to sing

in this company against me, are you? Why, man, they're still not paying us any royalties."

It was true. Nothing had been done yet about the international copyright, a very shameful neglect. My husband, although loath to do anything that would hurt the friend of his youth, was helpless because of a contract that he had already signed, and was forced to sing the part.

There was a good English company that ran in opposition to the American company and helped share the profits and honors, so that "The Mikado" was not such a tremendous success as "Pinafore." Mr. Whiffen again made a personal hit and had a wonderful make-up.

I met Sullivan at this time and Tom and I dined with him at old Delmonico's. That was when the famous restaurant was located on Twenty-sixth Street. Sullivan had a keen sense of humor of the quiet, English sort, and Tom was a fine foil for him. They kept me laughing all through that dinner as they brought up memories of the old days at Rochester.

Speaking of Delmonico's, I remember it again when I attended the one hundred and third banquet of the St. George's Society. The private dining-room was decorated with flags of England and America and a great, full-length portrait of Queen Victoria. Mr. Chauncey M. Depew was to have been present to respond to the toast, "The Memory and Genius of Shakespeare." He could not attend so Mr. Whiffen sang "The Death of Nelson," amid much enthusiasm.

In the summer of '86 we returned to England to see if it were possible for us to take up the profession over there. Not that America had not been good to us! Far from that. We loved it here and hated to think of leaving, but both Tom and I had relatives over there who were getting old, and they needed us.

After being there a few weeks, we staged some special matinees of "Hazel Kirke." It was well received, but we made a mistake in producing such an old play. Most of the critics made fun of it. The field in England seemed quite hopeless. The expenses of production were too high, and the stage had become a very

close corporation in the hands of a few well-known managers. My aunts advised us to return to America where we were better known. Even my mother, although she wanted me to stay with her, thought that that would be the wisest thing to do. We debated the question a long time, until one day I read in the newspaper that Mr. Daniel Frohman was organizing the Lyceum theatre stock company, and I decided to write to him about a position. I had known Mr. Frohman when he was the business manager of "The Iron Will."

I waited some time, thinking I was too late, but then I received a cable from Mr. Frohman saying that he had a place for me but not for Mr. Whiffen. Tom had so many connections in the States that this did not really matter. He was such a versatile actor. There were many productions in which he could find a place.

We returned to America in the fall of '87 just in time for me to open in "The Wife" at the Lyceum. The play was written by Belasco and De Mille, father of the two famous picture producers, Cecil and William. The play

was not at first a big success and Mr. Frohman started to rehearse another vehicle to hastily replace it, but in a few weeks luck changed and we found that we had a hit.

Georgia Cayvan, scarcely remembered now, but in her day one of New York's most popular leading ladies, made a fine impression in "The Wife." I can see her still, a striking brunette, and I can vision her as she stepped on the stage in a gown that was greatly admired. This is what they were wearing at formal dinner parties in the eighties,—a pink satin, bustle skirt over a white satin petticoat embroidered with pearls and gold spangles and ornamented around the bottom with garlands of embroidered pink roses. The effect of this lovely dress was heightened by side-panels of sage-green velvet.

It was also in '87 that I attended the first New York concert of Josef Hofmann when he was a child of ten. He was a remarkable musician for one so young, and on the program was a quotation by Rubinstein calling him the greatest musical genius since the days of Mozart.

The Lyceum theatre then did "Sweet Lavender," one of Pinero's early romantic plays, with a cast that included Charles Walcott, Mrs. Charles Walcott, W. J. Le Moyne, Herbert Kelcey, Henry Miller, Louise Dillon and Georgia Cayvan. A director from England was sent over to direct the play which had already been done in London, and I remember that he did not approve of the way I was playing the character part, and he worried me a great deal. I seldom have had trouble with directors. One morning, when I was absent for a few hours from rehearsal to attend to some detail of my wardrobe, this director showed the company how he thought my rôle should be played.

When I came back and heard about it, it distressed me a great deal and I sat in a corner looking decidedly downcast, I suppose. One of the younger members of the company came over to me and asked to know what was wrong. I was usually quite cheerful at rehearsals and enjoyed my work. I told him that nothing was wrong, but he insisted, ending up with, "If that Englishman's been annoying you, I'll

punch his head!" And that gallant young man was my poor Henry Miller.

In '89, we were doing another Belasco and De Mille play called "The Charity Ball." Our company was changed now and we had as new members, Fritz Williams and Effie Shannon. The play was a society drama, for the romantic costume play was passing. The public was demanding something more realistic. Of course, comparing those so-called realistic plays with the realism of an O'Neil is amusing today. The plots were always very theatrical and bore little relation to real life. Yet I often wonder if the theatre shouldn't always have a touch of the glamor of unreality. It is in all of us to play at make-believe.

Once, when we were rehearsing "The Charity Ball," Mrs. Walcott and I, thinking we had time enough, went out to seek some lunch while a scene just before ours was being rehearsed. As luck would have it, our scene was called while we were away, and when we came back, Mr. Belasco was very angry and called us down, ending up with: "And from now on you won't go out to lunch at all. You'll

SCENE FROM "THE PRIVATE SECRETARY," BY WILLIAM GILLETTE. MRS. THOMAS WHIFFEN IS THE STANDING FIGURE ON THE LEFT

stay in the theatre and eat beans and drink water!"

Mrs. Walcott, being a braver soul than I, spoke up pertly: "All right, Mr. Belasco! I'll bring the beans if you bring the water!" And she *did* bring a pot of Boston baked beans the next morning. Mr. Belasco took the joke and helped us eat the beans, bringing us a large dipper of water.

That same year, the opening of the Player's Club took place. It was considered a great event in the profession, for Mr. Booth was giving his home as a meeting place for the famous folk of the stage. Mr. Booth read an address presenting the deed of the club-house to Mr. Daly, the vice-president, who responded for the corporation. The club still cherishes Booth's rooms on the top floor of the old house. All his personal belongings are still there, exactly as he left them when he passed on.

Looking through my diaries and scrapbooks I find success after success for Mr. Daniel Frohman's Lyceum theatre. In rapid succession come "The Wife," "Nerves," "Old

Heads and Young Hearts," "Merry Gotham," by Elizabeth Marbury, and "White Roses." They are all plays forgotten today, but in their time they made names, money and success. I notice that Alan Dale was writing criticisms in '91, and I find that in one article he asks in his caustic manner, "What play that has been produced this season will live twenty years? Don't all speak at once."

It was during the run of "The Wife" I recall an amusing thing that happened to me. The second act was laid in a conservatory which had two or three entrances. One night, Miss Dillon caused a stage wait, by being delayed in her dressing room under the stage. I tried to cover up her absence by looking off the entrance through which she usually made her appearance, and saying over and over such improvised lines as, "What is the little puss doing?" or, "Here comes the little dear now." And suddenly she appeared in the entrance directly behind me, giving me a complete surprise and causing the audience to laugh heartily.

In '92 we did another new play, "Lady Boun-

tiful," in which dear Effie Shannon made a great hit in a pathetic part. May Robson was in this play also. This same year saw the first Actor's Fund Fair given in Madison Square Garden. Madison Square Garden reminds me of my old friend Richard Grant White, and I find among my letters, one from him written after I had received a book of his authorship on the subject of English landscapes. He apologizes for sending the book so late, but he had laid it aside safely, he thought, only to have his son take it away to read, and he adds, "A great compliment for one's own boy to read one's own book." That boy was Stanford White!

At the first Actor's Fund Fair, a star of diamonds was given to the most popular actress of that day. Votes were sold and I was assigned to that booth and I also took subscriptions. I used to carry the money about in my bustle, wrapped up in newspapers. Lovely Georgia Cayvan won the star. It was she whose career ended so tragically.

That year my mother died after a long and distinguished career. I could not be with her

at the last for she died suddenly. She was the second of the famous Pyne sisters to pass on, and now only my noted Aunt Louisa was left.

CHAPTER XI—*Death of Mr. Whiffen*

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE Nineties, we did a good many Pinero plays as the English playwright was most prolific at that time. "The Amazons," a comedy of three young ladies who were brought up like boys by their parents, was the most popular. Mr. Herbert Kelcey and I had a very funny scene together.

The theatres of old New York were rapidly changing as we drew nearer to the new century. My dear old Madison Square had become intimately associated with farce for, in 1891, Charles Hoyt leased it and produced his famous successes there, "A Texas Steer," "A Trip to Chinatown," etc. How New York roared at those pieces! I wonder if it would now? I suppose the slap-stick movie has taken the place of broad stage comedy.

More and more theatres were being built

and moving uptown. In fact, *everything* was moving uptown. I remember riding up the avenue on a bicycle to the park and looking in wonder at all the new buildings. That was the day of the bicycle and how I loved to ride. The popular song was, "On a Bicycle Built for Two," meaning the old tandem which is almost obsolete now. The tandem was the motorcycle of its day and a great favorite with lovers who would use it to go riding into the country on Sundays. Tom and I rode a great deal and belonged to one of the bicycle clubs, as numerous as golf clubs today, although Tom didn't care for the sport as much as I did. The bicycle costumes we women wore would look screamingly funny today with their tight waists, big hips, short full skirts and high-laced boots. I must have looked funnier than any of them, for I remember once in San Francisco, when I was riding through Golden Gate Park to the Cliff House with my son, I noticed every one staring at me and nudging each other and then laughing. When I got back to my hotel I asked little Tom if anything was wrong with my bicycle suit.

"No, Mother," he returned, leading me to a looking glass, "But they aren't worn with a *bonnet!*"

That funny old bonnet, tied with ribbons under my chin! I had forgotten that. You see what happens when you decide to be an old woman at thirty-five?

"The Benefit of the Doubt," Pinero's play after "The Amazons," saw the first appearance of Isabel Irving with the Lyceum company. She took Georgia Cayvan's place.

Oh, the crowding figures of those days—the tragic Eleanora Duse playing at the Fifth Avenue theatre in 1893! I saw her as "Camille," ranking with Modjeska's performance in beauty of soul and nobility of spirit.

The informal teas at Brander Matthews' where so many of the interesting people of the stage and of the literary world met,—dear Mrs. Gilbert, John Drew, Mr. Howells, Mme. Calvé.

Oscar Wilde and his plays. The comedies were being done in America for the first time, and I'll never forget how the critics took this opportunity to condemn the playwright. When

"The Woman of No Importance" was done by Rose Coghlan, one critic spoke of it as "one of Oscar Wilde's foul-minded plays." I think it is one of the most moral plays ever written, but it just goes to show how a man's reputation can poison everything he touches, especially in the eyes of intolerant people.

Tom and I knew Oscar Wilde and respected his talent and his keen wit. He was very fond of the violin and Tom used to play for him while he was in New York. I can see him now with his sorrowful eyes and long hair, slumped in a corner, nervously pulling his long fingers while Tom played Bach. Turning over my old letters, I find one from Mr. Wilde excusing himself for mixing up a date with my husband, regretting that he had made an engagement to speak in Philadelphia, and although he'd rather hear Tom play, he thought he'd better go, as they were paying him quite a sum to listen to him talk, and he supposed "they really expected him." He ended up by saying that they didn't want to hear him, they only wanted to *look* at him, making him feel like a nice, fat Persian kitten at a cat show.

Memorial Tablet in Rochester Cathedral

Poor Oscar Wilde, how little we understood him in the Nineties! "The Ideal Husband" was taken off the boards in New York because of Mr. Wilde's reputation.

Many stars came to the fore in the Nineties, —the much beloved Maude Adams, Ethel Barrymore, Viola Allen, William Faversham and Mary Mannering. I knew most of them from the very beginning of their careers, as there were fewer actors then, and the profession was knit more closely together. Few of us went outside of the theatre to find our friends.

In the year 1897, it was my lot to suffer a great loss. My husband was taken down with typhoid fever, and being then in his sixties, he was left in an extremely weakened state. The doctors ordered him to take a long trip, so he returned once more to England to visit his sister. I did not go with him as I was playing on the road. I had joined a company headed by the very popular James K. Hackett when Tom left.

Only a few weeks later, while playing in St. Louis, the very place where the young Tom had so romantically crossed the ice to visit his

young bride, I had a cable from England, telling me that my husband had had a relapse and was most seriously ill. I left at once for New York, and there saw Daniel Frohman, who asked me if I had enough money to carry me through. I told him that I had, but he insisted upon giving me a letter of credit, and also told me that my New York salary would continue while I was away.

I arrived in England two weeks before Tom passed on. It was a most crushing blow to me, for Tom had been not only a splendid and thoughtful husband, but a joyous companion and a kind friend as well. The stage had lost a sterling character-actor and an accomplished musician. Few know of him now, but his death caused much sorrow, both here and abroad, and the press recalled his exquisite high-comedy in such rôles as Sir Joseph Porter and Pooh-Bah, and the sweet tenor voice that was forever stilled.

Innumerable cables and letters of sympathy flooded in to me from all parts of the globe,—letters from people who did not know Tom, but who had heard him sing, or play his violin,

or who had been made happy by his delicately-humorous impersonations. In his life he had warmed and gladdened many hearts, and what more can we hope to achieve? It is the actor's best epitaph, at any rate.

It may not be amiss to say here, that after my dear husband's death, I remembered how dearly he loved and reverenced Rochester Cathedral (Rochester — Kent — England) where he had sung in the choir, as boy and man for many years—and the thought came to me of how much I should like to have some memorial to him in the Cathedral. I knew this would be a difficult matter, but with perseverance, after a time, I was able to realize my wish, and had a small tablet to his memory placed in the lovely old Cathedral of which he was so fond.

CHAPTER XII—

"Trelawney of The Wells"

BEING STILL A MEMBER OF DANiel Frohman's company I only stayed a short time in England, but while there I can recall a memory, or impression, I received of Queen Victoria, which might be of interest now. Feeling depressed, I made it a habit to walk about considerably, seeing points of interest in London that would take my mind off my loss. One morning, I happened to be at the memorial chapel, dedicated to the Prince Consort, when, with much pomp and ceremony, the royal carriage drove up. In the back, alone and shrouded in heavy mourning, I saw the Queen. She was old then, and very stout, and one could see that death was not far off.

Then the carriage stopped, and off stepped two of the Queen's Sikhs, strong, bronze men in their customary tall green turbans, and

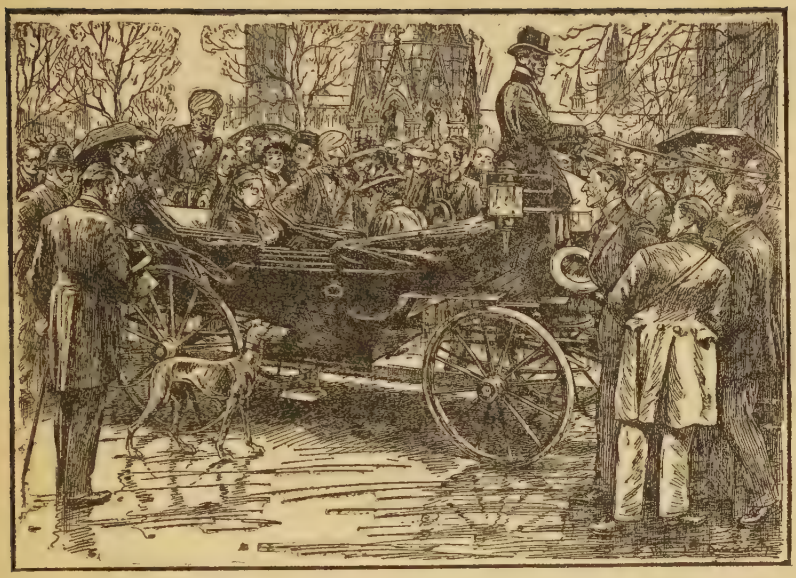
stood, one on each side of the carriage step. As the Queen rose to alight, both bodyguards offered her an arm, and she stepped down between them, standing a moment, supported by the two arms. She mumbled a few words which I could not hear, after which she began to walk down the long way to the chapel, the Sikhs still on each side of her, her arms locked in theirs. An admiring throng watched their Queen walk by—*walk,* did I say? Well, to the unobservant eye she walked, for she made the motions of walking, but to me, standing behind her, it was plain that the great Sikhs were really carrying her. There was about an inch of daylight between her long black skirts and the ground! And thus she passed down the long corridor, lined with her marvelling subjects, and majestically disappeared in the chapel. It was just another example of Victoria's indomitable will and courage.

I was back in America in time to take up my work in the cast of the "The Princess and the Butterfly," another Pinero play. This was not entirely successful, but in '98 we did the first American production of the same play-

wright's "Trelawney of the Wells," which was one of the biggest successes Pinero ever had in this country.

The new piece charmed from the very beginning, but I did not realize what a fine old play it is, until Mr. Tyler's revival of it last spring, which most readers of this must have seen, either in New York or on our coast-to-coast tour. Then, I realized how true are its characterizations, its situations and its story, for it has withstood the test of time, and entertained the sophisticated theatre-goer of today quite as much as they were entertained in the last of the Nineties. And I can see why. It is based on the fundamental human emotions that time can never change, as long as this old world keeps on going round,—young love, ambition, failure, success and happiness for all concerned at the falling of the last curtain.

On that old program of "Trelawney" which I still have, I notice that Mary Mannering played Rose, and I shall always remember the glorious vision of that charming girl as she sat in Sir William's parlor, at the beginning of the second act, dressed in a ruffled gown of



"Then the Carriage Stopped and Off Stepped Two of the Queen's Sikhs"

American beauty, looking like a dark rose herself. This picture never failed to win instant applause.

John Mason, now dead, played Tom Wrench, and Hilda Spong, who had enacted the rôle in the first London production, played a lovely and lively Imogen Parrott. Charles Walcott, hardly remembered today played Sir William, the part enacted so splendidly last spring by poor John Drew.

I had the part of Mrs. Mossop, the landlady, which I played in the revival, and how strange it seemed to be repeating today the same lines that I had spoken in '98, and hearing the audience react to them exactly as they did then. The play ran for a solid year in New York City alone.

In 1899, Augustin Daly died, and the theatre sustained an almost irremediable loss. He left his collection of relics and his theatrical library to Harvard University, and there it may still be seen, as fine a collection as there is in the world.

Daniel Frohman acquired his theatre, old Daly's, and we of the Lyceum company did

"Trelawney" there, but the day of the stock company was past, I regret to say. The day of the star and the actor-manager was coming in with the dawn of the new century, and the great training school for the young actor was to be no more,—at least not in New York.

The beginning of 1900 found me in Mr. Henry Miller's company. The nice young man who had been so much in love when I first knew him, back in the days of "Young Mrs. Winthrop," had become one of the first actor-managers. I went with his company to San Francisco in a repertory of plays that included, "The Liars," "The Adventures of Ursula," and "Lord and Lady Algy." Margaret Anglin was Mr. Miller's leading lady, and that was the beginning of a long friendship I enjoyed with her and which still exists, although we see each other very little now. Miss Anglin tours a great deal and so do I, so we are like the ships that pass in the night.

I was glad to be back in San Francisco, although it brought back many sad memories of Tom and of the early days we had spent

there with Herne and the Lingards. I have always had the greatest fondness for San Francisco, and the public has always remembered me and has given me the most gratifying receptions, and I am not the only actor who can say that, either. San Francisco chooses its favorites and then is faithful to them. For example, there was Lotta. She made her first appearances there as a child, and loved the city so that she gave it the fountain that stands at Market and Kearney streets, one of the old landmarks that withstood the earthquake and fire.

With the present high cost of living, it does not seem possible that at the old St. Germaine restaurant in San Francisco, a superbly cooked dinner was to be had for the sum of fifty cents along with all the claret one could drink, and brandy in your coffee if you desired it. No wonder it was the favorite rendezvous of the profession! The patrons were always most picturesque. In one corner you could see poor, paint-smeared artists, in another, long-haired musicians, and in another, the actor-folk. The waiters were all decided characters, and each

group had their favorite whom they called by his first name.

Young Tom was with me now, having been graduated from Stanford University, and my sister's daughter, Blanche Kelleher, who had a short stage career before she was married. So you see, I was not so lonely.

While still in San Francisco, Henry Miller tried out a play called "Brother Officers," which Charles Frohman had faith in and wanted to see how it would take with an audience. It was well liked, and later, returning to New York, we again played it and it again met with success. Guy Standing played in it and also Margaret Anglin.

"Heartsease" came next, that highly romantic play in which Henry Miller became so popular, really reaching the rather doubtful prestige of a matinee-idol. What woman of today, the young girl of yesterday, can ever forget how he thrilled them in his love scenes!

In "Heartsease" there was no part I could play, so Mr. Miller wrote in a character for me, that of an old woman in the prologue. Unfortunately, it was an Irish part, calling for

a brogue. An Irish brogue had always been my Waterloo, and I assure you, I must have been quite bad, although the critics did not say so. My son said that I gave it a wee bit of Scotch and Cockney for good measure and a dash of Welsh.

A new playwright was fast coming into prominence now, the cultured and elegant Clyde Fitch, and it was in one of his plays that young Ethel Barrymore made her first big hit, "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines." I played with Miss Barrymore in that, under the management of Charles Frohman. Mr. Fitch was a considerable Beau Brummel, but quite delightful when he indulged in his polished witticisms. He had a perfectly appointed house which was the talk of New York and there he gave some charming teas and musicales. I shall never forget one given in honor of Jean and Edouard de Reszke when those two famous French singers were the rage of New York. A very select party of guests were invited and after tea the two brothers were asked to sing. The esthetic Clyde Fitch was horrified when instead of singing selections

from the opera, the De Reszkes refused to sing anything else but the popular "Coon Songs," begining with, "Hello, my baby, hello, my rag-time gal." They had a magnificent time and so did the guests, but poor Clyde Fitch fled from the room, and would not return until they were finished.

Mr. Fitch attended rehearsals of his plays, immaculately dressed, never wearing the same suit twice, it seemed to me, and he sat like a prince, smoking gold-tipped cigarettes. However, he worked very hard at rehearsals, rewriting and directing, and everyone knows that he was an industrious and prolific writer. The most popular actresses of the day created his heroines,—Mary Mannering, Maxine Elliot, Ethel Barrymore and Clara Bloodgood. The last-named actress I shall speak about later on.

About this time, I appeared in a concert with David Bispham, special performances of a one-act opera called, "Adelaide," or "An Incident in the Life of Beethoven." The opera had speaking and singing parts, and Mr. Bispham, who always wanted to act, played

Beethoven, which was a speaking part. He was excellent in the part and had a splendid make-up. These performances were given as a benefit at the Waldorf-Astoria.

In '03 I was again with Ethel Barrymore in a play called, "Cousin Kate," but unfortunately, after I had opened in it, I had a contract that called for my appearance in a play about Major André, and I was forced to appear in that, leaving "Cousin Kate," which was a big hit. Ethel Barrymore did all in her power to keep me, but it was no use. And then "Major André" was a failure and I was out of work. But that is the actor's luck, after all! I had become hardened to such things, long before.

I joined a company of Fitch's play, "The Girl with the Green Eyes," headed by Clara Bloodgood. We went on tour, and in the Middle West Miss Bloodgood left the company to return to New York to nurse her husband. The play continued on tour and finally reached San Francisco. There I was taken suddenly ill with pneumonia, and not having my son or niece with me, a very dear friend

took me into her home. She turned her son out of his room, put me to bed and sent for a doctor. There I remained for five weeks at the point of death. My niece, who was then married, came on from Chicago and looked after me, and when I was well enough, took me to convalesce at Del Monte, near Monterey, California.

Looking back on the material I have for the year 1901, I find a comment from Clyde Fitch in defense of his lighter plays. He was somewhat of a prophet, for he said: "The American public *must* be amused. In this respect we are more like the French than the Germans. It will be a long time before the American theatre-goer will give substantial encouragement to psychological and poetical plays such as Hauptmann, Sudermann, or Ibsen are producing."

It *has* been a long time!—fifteen or twenty years.

I also note the passing of another dear friend, James A. Herne, in June, 1901, and among my letters I find a short tribute that in a few simple words sums up his life: "He was

popular with the common people because he understood the pathos and comedy in their humble lives, and his fine mentality commanded the respect of all."

CHAPTER XIII—

Miss Anglin and "The Great Divide"

THE NEW CENTURY BROUGHT me a goodly share of ill health and sorrow, but then, as one grows old, how can one escape the troubles and sadnesses that darken our skies? Our laughter must be sometimes tempered with tears to enable us to fully appreciate that laughter when it comes to us again. Above all, we must be patient. I had had more than my share of happiness with Tom and I did not feel that I should complain.

In New York, after my serious illness in California, I had had disquieting letters from my Aunt Louisa, and reading between the lines, I felt that she did not have many more days to live. Being very fond of her, and she of me, I decided to go to England, and did in 1904. My famous aunt died shortly after I arrived, and the papers were filled with the

news of her passing. She was indeed a notable and well-loved figure, and to this day, in England, one can buy songs dedicated to or first sung by Louisa Pyne. Recalling her remarkable resemblance to Queen Victoria, when she and I were driving through the park in an open carriage or victoria, a short time after the Queen's death, people along the way jumped up in startled surprise and stared aghast, rubbing bewildered eyes. The resemblance was heightened by the fact that Aunt Louisa had recently lost her husband and was in heavy mourning, as the Queen had been just before her death.

Being in a weakened condition from my illness in America, I again took to my bed, this time with the same illness that had fatally stricken John Drew on tour with "Trelawney of the Wells," and so I did not leave England until the end of July. While I was still an invalid, Henry Miller and Margaret Anglin came on a business trip to London, and hearing of my plight, Miss Anglin very sweetly came often to see me. She cheered my dreary days with her smile and her witty stories

and the thoughtful gifts of flowers and sweetmeats. She did all this in spite of the fact that she was very busy, as she had come over to buy a wardrobe for her New York production of "Camille."

Henry Miller, too, visited me, and urged me to return with him to open in a few weeks in a new play, but my only answer was to show him my poor swollen hands. I was so badly off that I could not move my arms to my face. I could walk without falling and that was about all. I was very unhappy and must have made a bad patient. I know I have never welcomed anything more than the day that I sailed for America. There was little left in England for me now, except sad memories, but in the country of my adoption, there was my son and my niece and my work.

Again I played with the ill-fated Clara Bloodgood, this time in a play called "The Coronet of the Duchess," by Clyde Fitch. It was a failure and only ran for about two weeks. Miss Bloodgood was discouraged and morbid. I believe that this was the beginning of her dark melancholy that led her later to

take her own life. What a pity, for she was a clever actress with a brilliant mind and should have gone far in the theatre.

Next Mr. Tyler engaged me as one of the old women in a revival of the popular "Merely Mary Ann," with the beautiful Eleanor Robson. It was she who left the stage at the height of her career to wed Mr. Belmont. While playing in Philadelphia, I received an offer from Miss Anglin to play with her in a new drama called, "Zira." I accepted and found myself in another big hit. We were still playing it in 1906 when my beloved San Francisco had the great earthquake and fire.

We went on tour with "Zira," and while in Chicago, Miss Anglin discovered an exciting new play called, "The Great Divide." She liked it from her first reading, and I shall always remember, during a matinée of "Zira," how Miss Anglin sent the script up to me and asked me to pass judgment on it. I thought it a powerful play, also, so in a few days, with her usual enthusiasm and energy, Miss Anglin had the play in rehearsal, having wired for Mr. Moody, the author. We played it for

special matinées in four days, after working day and night, hardly leaving the theatre. Our food was sent to us in the theatre. That has always been Margaret Anglin's way of doing things, and how inspiring she is to work with! I envy the young actor who comes to work in her company. How much he will learn if he is wise!

It was Miss Anglin, too, who really discovered Alla Nazimova, playing in an obscure Russian company in the Bowery, and persuaded Mr. Henry Miller to give her a chance on the English stage. He did so, and she played "Hedda Gabler," after she had learned to speak our tongue in a very short time. I played Aunt Julie in this production. Nazimova was a sensation and gave a fascinating portrayal of Hedda. She was very eccentric at rehearsals and used to twist up the English language in a most amusing way. I remember she wanted me to wear full mourning in the play, but I argued that I would not have time to make the change and that it would make the character ridiculous. However, she insisted, but later, when the critics called atten-

tion to the error, she came to me and asked me to please "wear open face." I did not understand at first, but soon learned from her wild gestures that she meant I was to wear no veil.

When "The Great Divide" was produced in Washington, it was considered immoral because of the situation in the first act, where Ruth goes away with the man, against her will. To make it suit the morals of the day, Ruth's speech to Stephen, ending with, "I will go with you," had to have "under the law" tacked on to it, before we could come into New York.

Of course that is absurd, but I wish they were a little more careful nowadays. I have had to refuse to play in some of the plays that have been offered to me these last few years, because they have really embarrassed me with their utter bad taste. I can stand anything but bad taste! Old-fashioned, do I hear you say? Yes, if it is old-fashioned to be fastidious. Yes, indeed! The truth of an O'Neil play I accept, but not the bad taste of a nasty, bedroom farce! I have too much respect for the

traditions of the theatre and too much respect for the audience that comes to see me. And above all else, too much respect for myself and for my reputation.

CHAPTER XIV—*Vagrant Memories*

I AM COMING NOW TO THE END of my diaries and notebooks, and the stack of pictures of stars of yesterday is dwindling rapidly. Sarony, the noted photographer of his day (*Napoleon* Sarony, who for over thirty years took pictures of all the celebrities) is being replaced by modern photographers and their camera work,—blurred, "artistic" creations which may be art, but certainly are not real likenesses. And after all, why have pictures of loved ones if they do not resemble them? I suppose that's old-fashioned too, isn't it?

I am approaching the stars and plays of this generation, all of which are more or less familiar, I believe, to the readers of these pages. Therefore, a detailed account of them would scarcely be of interest. I shall skip about at random now, relating little scenes that occur

to me as I re-read what I have written, and I may even go back again and touch on impressions of the far-away past that have hitherto evaded me.

Forgive me if my thoughts lack unity and continuity, from now on, for the memory does such startling things and plays so many tricks when it has a storehouse of eighty-three years and over to choose from. Start disturbing one old cob-webbed trunk and that disturbs another, and so you go, jumping from the present to the past and back again.

Of course, in writing memories, you are always afraid that you are leaving out very important incidents and forgetting to mention your oldest and dearest friends, and I suppose that is what I shall be accused of doing. But to recall and to name all the rôles and plays and important people I have been connected with in my lifetime would take up more space than is allotted to me, and also would give me a severe case of brain-fever in the bargain. One of my regrets is that a couple of precious diaries in which I had noted much that had marked my professional activities were lost a

few seasons ago through the stupidity of a hotel maid, while I was on tour with "The Goose Hangs High," and I am sure that those pages contained much that was amusing and interesting. But I cannot begin to sigh over lost things, at my age!

My son can now help me to recollect a great deal, and also my daughter Peggy, who was raised by her father's family and came to me in 1912 and has been my constant companion. You've seen her name on programs with me, I'm sure, in vaudeville, in "Trelawney of the Wells," and in other plays of the last ten years or so. Peggy is an accomplished actress and writer who has been my business manager since I have become too old to attend to the annoying details of interviewing managers, signing contracts, and so forth, and I owe a great deal to her companionship and her understanding and her infinite patience. I am an old lady, you must remember, and she is a young lady, and sometimes I know she must think me annoying and a bit of a care, but if she does, I have never seen evidences of it. There is always a ready smile for me and a pat of tender-

ness, and how that Peggy can keep me before the public!

I remember last year, when I became despondent and thought that I was too old to go on with my work, and must at last climb on the hated shelf, she came to me waving aloft the contract for "Trelawney," and it was the same way with, "The Two Orphans," revival, the year before that, and before that, "The Goose Hangs High."

And now, I've appeared in a musical comedy! Oh, yes, a musical comedy! I knew, in my secret heart, that that would come sooner or later. I've done everything else, vaudeville, motion pictures and now—how my companions of yesterday would chuckle if they could have seen me in a musical comedy and doing a dance, too. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Here's a clipping about a play called "Electricity," by William Gillette, that brings back a memory. Marie Doro was in that and William Gillette, one of my oldest friends, was directing as well as producing his new play. I'm sorry to say it wasn't a success, but I recall

Mrs. Thomas Whiffen and O. P. Heggie in the All-star Revival of "Trelawney of the Wells"

that I was playing a woman of the poorer classes and dressed the part in an old skirt and shirtwaist. At the dress rehearsal, William Gillette came to me and suggested that my skirt was not right,—it was too new-looking, he said.

"*New* looking!" I repeated in amused astonishment—"William, do you remember 'May Blossom,' about twenty years ago?"

"Of course," he returned. "How could I forget it? I was stage manager then."

"Well," I said, making him a curtsy, "this is the same skirt I wore in that!"

And speaking of that same dress, that like myself, will never seem to go on the shelf, I put it on once, up here in Virginia, and went out to feed the chickens and ducks, but they were so afraid of this strange skirt of another day, that they fled in terror, and would not eat the grain I threw to them until I had gone indoors.

Here I come across a picture taken of a play called, "The Beautiful Adventure," an adaptation from the French, presented in New York by Mr. Frohman. It should have been a

success but due to bad casting it only lasted a few weeks. I hope some day someone will revive it, as it is a charming play and is worthy of a better fate.

What I wanted to say about it, however, is that Mr. Frohman, without my permission, announced in his publicity, that "The Beautiful Adventure" was to see my retirement from the stage. I was indignant (again someone was attempting to tuck me away on the shelf) and I went to him, demanding to know why he had made such a statement. He laughed, and having utter faith in the play's appeal, said, "Well, 'The Beautiful Adventure' will run for five years, anyway, and by that time maybe you *will* be ready to retire!"

This was scarcely an anodyne for my hurt feelings. In five years I would have been—let's see, that would have brought us up to 1917—I would have been only 73 then! Why should I have retired at 73? "Stuff and nonsense!" as Granny might have said in "The Goose Hangs High."

Oh, yes, "The Goose Hangs High." That stirs up other embers. Because of a slight re-

semblance on the stage, and because we both have played similar parts, and because during her last years, Mrs. Gilbert dressed as I did and wore old-fashioned bonnets, I have often been mistaken for that beloved actress. Perhaps some of you who read this are doing that very thing now.

Well, when I was playing in "The Goose Hangs High" (it was in Boston, I believe) an elderly lady approached me on the street and exclaimed, in a flutter, "Oh, Mrs. Gilbert, I'm so glad to see you!"

Smiling, I protested, but the woman would not hear of it. "Oh, yes, you are," she insisted with the greatest assurance, and wagging a merry finger, "I've seen you lots of times, and I know!"

"But I'm not," I said firmly, and then, thinking to settle the argument at once, I added, "Mrs. Gilbert is dead."

Do you think that even that convinced her? Indeed, it didn't! To my amazement, she laughed heartily and said, "Oh, no, you're Mrs. Gilbert, all right, but you always *did* have a sense of humor! Dead, oh, dear me,—

dead!" And still laughing, away she went, and I am sure told Mrs. Gilbert's joke to everyone.

I shrugged my shoulders and said to Peggy, "If she wishes to believe it and it makes her happy, I don't mind."

Besides, it is a splendid compliment to me, for Mrs. Gilbert was a fine actress, a great lady of the stage and much better known than I have ever been.

And I shall always remember the night when the Shuberts invited me to attend, as a guest of honor, their stupendous revival of "Pinafore," done at the huge Century theatre. It happened that I was opening the same night in a revival of "The Two Orphans," but since the theatre where I was playing was close to the Century, and I did not come in until late in the play, I accepted the Shubert's kind invitation and said that I would attend their performance for a short time anyhow, in memory of the first American production of "Pinafore," many, many years ago. Fay Templeton was playing my old part of Buttercup—little May the Fay, of the old Honest John days—no, not little May the Fay any more, but a

large, plump woman who had retired from the stage, but came back just to play this part. Incidentally, she was the only one in that large cast who really captured the true Gilbert and Sullivan spirit.

There was a regular-sized boat—a tremendous chorus—an all-star cast—thousands and thousands of dollars spent, and yet that simple little production way back in 1878 was a rare gem beside this great, glittering diamond of paste. One so real and beautiful—the other counterfeit and vulgar.

I returned to the revival of "The Two Orphans" long before "Pinafore" was over, but when I left I remember that the chorus was doing, of all things, the Charleston!—and May the Fay was doing it too! I wonder if she ever remembers those long ago days at Key West when she sang, "I'se de crow!"

CHAPTER XV—More Scattered Leaves

TODAY I AM LOOKING OVER autographed letters and cards, yellow and scattered leaves of other autumns, to refresh this perplexing memory of mine, and here I find a pretty card from Lotta, the favorite of the mining camps and of the gallery gods. This little card, still faintly emanating perfume that is suspiciously like violets, once accompanied a bouquet of flowers, sent to me by Lotta Crabtree, when I was playing in Boston in 1923. That was just a year before her death. She had made Boston her home, and she never forgot her friends of the profession whenever they played that city. She was one of the few actresses who left a fortune when she passed on.

And here's a letter from beautiful Lily Langtry, who had sent me white violets in San

Francisco when I was ill. Later, when she came to this country again to play in vaudeville, I sent her lilies, and by the grace of good fortune, they happened to arrive on her birthday. Her gracious letter thanks me a thousand times and apologizes for not writing sooner, but the double daily performances at Keith's Palace exhausted her. I know they do, for I've played them, and Lily Langtry was not young, either.

Then here's a memory of Sarah Bernhardt. It was during her next to the last "farewell tour" in America, and the American actors had decided to present the great French tragedienne with a gold wreath of laurel. I was chosen to make the presentation, although I'm sure they could have found some one much more prominent and more worthy of the honor.

However, they would not take a refusal from me, so I prepared a little presentation speech in French. Madame Bernhardt was playing in vaudeville then, at the Palace, so after a matinée, the ceremony took place. The "Divine" Sarah was seated on the stage,

dressed in flowing, classic robes, and close to a little table on which one of her expressive hands rested. She looked fascinating and quite young.

I confess I experienced stage-fright when I got up to make my little speech, and my hands trembled violently as I proffered her the gold wreath on a velvet cushion. And then Sarah Bernhardt, gripping the table beside her, rose with a fine show of spirit and grace, in spite of the fact that this was not long after her leg had been amputated, and she kissed me on both cheeks and thanked me over and over, her golden voice poignant with emotional tears. After that, I stepped back and she thanked the cheering audience, made up almost entirely of the profession.

The amusing part of all this, as far as I'm concerned, happened afterwards, when Mr. Acton Davis informed Madame Bernhardt that I was the original Buttercup in America. Sarah Bernhardt could not make this out. She looked at me in a most bewildered manner and shook her head, and then went off into a volley of amazed, excited questions, flinging

them at Acton Davis. Then I understood what it was that puzzled her. She thought that Acton Davis had said that I was the original *Butterfly* in Puccini's opera. It took some time before we could make her understand, giving her a literal translation of butter and cup. I didn't blame her for being amazed, for I was about seventy then and Puccini's opera had been first produced in America only about ten years before that time.

Here I run across some so-called "fan letters," written to me when I played "Steve" with Eugene O'Brien, the moving picture star. Please don't misjudge me when I tell you they're all from the opposite sex! Without exception, they are from very young men,—I could be "Granny" to any of them,—and that's why I cherish their letters along with other scattered leaves.

I played Steve's grandmother in "Steve," and hardly a performance went by without a letter from some young man who called me, "his best girl," or "his sweetheart," or "the first lady of the stage." And here's a most romantic one from an admirer I shall never

know. Among other nice things he writes, "for the first time in my life, last evening, I wanted to be a stage-door Johnnie."

Perhaps, too, I've cherished these letters because, at times, when I'm blue, they reassure me that I'm not yet on the shelf. Also, they bear out a theory of mine that the "tired business man" does *not* prefer immoral plays! "Steve" was a sweet, clean play, and there wasn't one of those young men who wrote to me who did not have a line or two of praise for the comedy-drama as well as for Granny. And on the road, "Steve" was a big commercial success!

One speech that I had in "Steve" and which always brought applause, was a line or two regarding growing old. It was always said with real feeling by me, because I know the truth of it. Let's see,—Oh, dear, it's so hard to separate the countless excerpts from plays that I still carry about in my storehouse of memories. I stare out at the blue mountains through the green curtains of wild honeysuckle, and minutes tick by—— Then, all at once, I have pounced upon it as a cat pounces

JOHN DREW AS SIR WILLIAM IN "TRELAWNEY OF THE WELLS," THE RÔLE HE WAS PLAYING WHEN HE DIED

upon a mouse, flashing past, and I must write it quickly before I lose it again.

"It's kinda nice to be old. It's not so bad going down hill, if you've had a pretty good climb, and have seen the view from the top!"

That epitomizes my life. "A pretty good climb,"—long and hard at times,—*very* hard, but the view from the top was worth it, and now the way down hill is smooth going, and the compensations of age are like many flowers growing beside the road, to give me pause and to make me wonder.

While touring the States with "Trelawney of the Wells," last year, all of us were besieged by autograph-fiends, thicker than the rats of Hamelin town. Peggy became a veritable policeman scaring them away from the stage door and the lobby of my hotel, where they were always lying in wait.

Now, nothing would please me better than to write my name down in all the pretty books and for all the pretty, dewy-eyed girls, but again I must insist that I'm not as young as I used to be, and with the exacting duties of

the stage, I haven't the energy or the time to be writing my name all day long.

The siege was so constant and so furious, that the company became very amused, and I remember one afternoon, during the supper scene of the first act, a piece of bread rolled off the table and leaping across the footlights, fell into the audience and was picked up by some one. Clever Wilton Lackaye, always ready with some apt remark, said, loud enough for the audience to hear, "Bring it around, after the show, and we'll autograph it!"

And yet another leaf,—the leaf that had just dropped from the tree,—the gay, bright leaf of many colors,—John Drew. I saw him for the last time when he left the happy Trelawney company, just before we played Portland. He was to rejoin us in San Francisco, it was hoped. He smiled so bravely at me, and said, "Look at you, Whiffy, eighty-three and hopping about like a wren, while I"—and then, shaking his head over his own sorry plight, boarded the train, leaving me almost ashamed of the good health I was enjoying, and wishing I could give him a little of my

own sprightliness. When he was unable to join us in San Francisco, it was a great shock to us and brought a tragic curtain down on our comedy of the stage. It was the first time John Drew had failed to keep an engagement.

CHAPTER XVI—

A Few Questions and Answers

I'M ALWAYS BEING ASKED QUESTIONS, because when you're old you're supposed to be wise. How true that is, I don't know, but at least one learns some things through experience, after living eighty-three years. The questions range all the way from what do I eat and drink to keep so active to advice regarding matrimony and divorce.

Constantly, I am being besieged by young, stage-struck girls who want me to tell them how to go about becoming an actress. That is where I am usually stumped, like the wise old owl, and just look round-eyed and listen, for it is most difficult to give advice on that subject. So many things must be considered, and a young person can hardly tell how he or she will like the stage or how the public will like them, until they have had some real

experience behind the footlights. So I generally say: "If you feel you *must* do it, then take all your courage and go forth, preparing to meet heart-aches and disillusionments, but don't give up until you've given yourself a real chance before a real audience. You'll find out soon enough whether you're made for it or not, and if you are, then do as I have done, —*live for your profession!* Put your whole heart and soul into it and when your first success comes, don't say to yourself, I have reached the goal,—because the goal is *never* reached. There is always something to learn!"

Today, success comes quickly and, in my judgment, too easily. Mere youngsters are being made "stars" after they have attracted attention in *one* big part. Why, in my young days, no one was made a "star" until he had proved himself capable of playing a variety of parts and playing them *technically* well. Youth and beauty were not considered the only requisites for an actor as is so often the case today. When I went into the movies in support of sweet Mary Miles Minter, I found that the biggest reputations were based almost

entirely on youth and beauty. If that is all they need, what happens *after* evanescent youth and beauty fades? They dwindle along for a little while on their reputations, and then pass into the dark and crowded domain of forgotten actors.

On the other hand, if they have studied and have gradually acquired technical skill, when the bloom of youth is gone, they can step easily into character rôles and mature parts, discovering richer and more gratifying material. The big rôles are always written for the mature actor. No one expects a child of fourteen to play Juliet. Mary Anderson tried it, when she was young, and although she looked the part, she was never really satisfying, because her lack of technique and experience could not sound the depths of Shakespeare's tragic heroine. We have learned to expect middle-aged and even old Hamlets, although Hamlet, in the play, is only supposed to be a very young prince.

Do not think from this that you are reading the envious comments of an old, complaining woman who has outlived her time and whose

life is filled with regrets. I speak this way only because I believe that struggle makes character and enlarges perceptions, and that we learn to appreciate God's gifts only after we attain them through nights of watching and of prayer.

How do I keep so young and active, do I hear you ask? No, I don't take exercises and I'm not a vegetarian, nor do I attribute it to some theory such as, "Day by day in every way." It's all very simple. The body keeps young if your mind keeps young. But how do you keep your mind young? you want to know. Well, in my work, which has been such a big part of my life, I have never allowed myself to lose the spirit of play or that glamor of the stage. Every night is like my first night, and I am always nibbled with stage-fright as I stand in the wings waiting to hear my cue. Never allow the thing you are doing to become commonplace, say I, if you want to keep the mind sparkly. Keep out of ruts by bringing just a little imagination to everything you do. There is no excuse for an actor to become stale, as the stage has charm—the

charm of uncertainty and the charm of make-believe that makes children of us all!

And what about your married life, Mrs. Whiffen? I think I've answered that in these pages. Tom and I had twenty-nine years of happy married life, and that is why all these divorces you read about in the profession nowadays seem so unnecessary to me. We had our ups and downs to be sure,—neither one of us was perfect, but we learned to respect and to trust each other. So many blame their unhappiness on the profession,—its separations and its so-called temptations, but first they should examine themselves, and perhaps they will find that the fault lies in their own intolerance and lack of faith. We must not be too quick to judge and we must close our ears to the pernicious gossip of the theatre. Also, we should find some common interest. Tom and I had our music. Others might find mutual happiness in books or in children.

When I was playing in vaudeville during the war years, one little sketch called, "Foxy Grandpa," arranged by my daughter Peggy, was very popular, principally because of the

last speech which I, as Grandma, spoke to the young couple, just married. It was a speech arranged by Peggy and me, and was so admired that I finally had to have many copies of it printed to send to all those who requested it as a keepsake. One man asked me for a copy to read at the wedding of a favorite daughter.

I think it would be quite fitting to close my memoirs with that speech. I have found a last frayed copy of it among my pictures and clippings, and as I re-read it, suddenly I look up through the curtains of honeysuckle to find that evening has stolen on me unawares and the sky is afire with the colors of sunset. This Virginia sky is one of God's favorite canvases, and here the Great Master paints his endless pictures with his brush in the dying sun.

In this luminous region of high altitudes, the colors of that sunset canvas reflect on and illuminate the mountains and the valleys, and while it lasts, the effect is nothing short of divinity. And then, like long-drawn chords of music, it passes,—lingeringly, caressingly, almost imperceptibly,—the colors subtly fading and darkening,—yellow into gold,—red

into scarlet,—blue into purple. Black crowns it all.

And I read once more those lines, as Peggy and Tom call to me from the kitchen, "Mother, come in now. Don't strain your eyes out there in the dark! You'll have to begin to wear glasses, if you keep that up! Come in now!"

"Just a moment," I answer—"I'm not really reading. I'm just refreshing my memory."

And closing my eyes, I again speak the lines that I have repeated hundreds and hundreds of times:

"My children, now that you are married, you are beginning a new life and remember it is for you to make or mar your future happiness.

"This is the noon-time of your day,—the sun is shining and the sky is blue above you, and everything is bright. But later on comes the afternoon and that is the hardest part of the day, for it is the time when shadows creep up, when clouds begin to gather, and if you are not careful they may culminate in storms that may wreck your whole life.

"Learn to center all your hopes of a real and lasting happiness on your own fireside. Cherish the faith that in home, and the love of home, lies the true source of domestic felicity. Then, when you stand in the twilight, as I do now, you can look back without regret on the years of contentment, peace, and love you have enjoyed, and welcome the coming night, stealing on and shading you, soothingly, gently, as you fall asleep.

"Bless you, my children, bless you."

THE END

STEPHENS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA, MO.

PN
2287
.W457
A3

27289

W
K

PN
2287
.W457
A3

27289

Whiffen, Blanche (Galton)

TITLE
Keeping off the shelf.

DATE DUE	BORROWER'S NAME